

SOCCER

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Happy Birthday Peter Sharne

By John Economos

PETER SHARNE former Marconi and dynamic Australian International winger, turns 51 this coming Thursday. Yet it seems only yesterday that this still boyish-looking 'Sharney' was slicing through defences with effortless ease using his scorching pace whilst hugging the touchline.

Such was his explosive acceleration and pace, (easily the fastest winger over the past four decades in Australian Soccer), Sharney electrified crowds during the mid 70s and 80s with his high-octaned dazzling displays.

Married for the past 21 years to his beloved Anna, the Sharnes have two boys, Steven 19 and David 17.

Recently the current Club Marconi Board of Directors presented Peter Sharne with a magnificent crystal trophy to commemorate having played 200 games in First Grade.

With 40 Australian international caps alongside his name, last October the great Peter Sharne was most belatedly inducted into the Hall of Fame with his Award of Distinction.

Sharne broke onto the international arena in 1977 in Melbourne when Australia clashed with the touring national team from Iran.

Next week ABSW will bring our readers an exclusive interview with this former Marconi international super-star.

On behalf of ABSW and all it's readers, Peter Sharne Happy Birthday for this Thursday.

2007 NSW PREMIER LEAGUE SHARKS ATTACK!

By Mark Stavroulakis

There was certainly a feeding frenzy over the weekend at the Fairfax Community Stadium when the Sutherland Shire Sharks ripped open the Blacktown City Demons 3-1 to put them one point adrift of first placed Bankstown City.

Sharks striker Paul Harries starred for the Shire boys as he, as well as Matthew Smith and Omar Obaid notched for Ron Corry's squad.

Following the Sharks success has also been Manly United.

They easily accounted for a hapless Sydney Olympic squad with three goals to nil as Beau Busch, Joey Schrippa and Robbie Cattanaach all got their names on the scoresheet.

Front runners Bankstown City dropped its first points of the season as they were held to a 1-1 all draw with the Marconi Stallions.

The game featured two penalties which both teams converted as Stallions skipper Luke Casserly and youngster Philip Makrys notched from the penalty spot.

In other matches, the A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers continued its impressive run of late beating the win-less Penrith-Nepean United 2-0.

Promising striker Robbie Younis and Anthony Hartshorn got the goals on the evening.

While finally down the South Coast, Sydney United conjured up its first victory of 2007 with a 2-0 win over the Wollongong Wolves where Mile Jedinak starred for the Reds with a brace.

For more on the NSW Premier League turn to pages 15-18 for a re-cap of the weekend's matches.



Happy Sutherland Sharks players celebrate their 3-1 victory over the Blacktown City Demons

Huge South American clashes not so big!

The two high-profile Friendly Internationals for the Socceroos against two of the World's Footballing powerhouses, Uruguay, and new World number One ranked Argentina, could well and truly become farcical as a lack in communication between the FFA and the players involved in the Socceroo set-up are set to hit a wall in their relationship.

Socceroo Captain, Mark Viduka has voiced his opinion on the upcoming International Friendlies on home soil, condemning the timing of the two matches.

The increased strain on Professional Footballers these days means that there is very little time for players to re-cover and re-group from the pressures of a long season, leaving the European off-season as a much needed break in the players' calendar.

(Story continued on Page 3)



Socceroos' skipper Mark Viduka



(L-R) MARCONI DIRECTORS: Frank Oliveri, Sam Nolosi, Joe Romeo, Sam Vaccaro, centre-holding his crystal treasured trophy the former Marconi International winger Peter Sharne, with Marconi's Soccer chairman Vince Foti, Vice President Roland Melosi, Robert Carniato and Gabriele Zamprogno.

What Else...

- Soccer NSW's Tiger Turf tournament set for kick-off
- Queensland Roar building for long-term
- Full Wraps on the Victorian and Queensland Premier Leagues
- Mark Bridge, Franco Parlisi, Jeremy Brockle & Ljubo Milicevic Interviews
- Mariners look for local to open pre-season campaign
- Asian Champions League Previews
- World re-cap of the weekends matches and feature news items



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American flavour hits
Sydney FC

An unknown American by the name of Michael Enfeld is currently on trial with Branko Culina's Sydney FC squad.

Enfeld made his debut for Sydney against the Wollongong Wolves in their 3-2 friendly win and from reports made a dazzling impact scoring in the friendly clash.

Once on the books of MLS side Los Angeles Galaxy, the promising midfielder was one of two players currently on trial at the club.

The other player was Alfredo Estves who also made his debut for the club against the Wolves.

Beware of Washington

Urawa Red Diamonds warmed up to their second Asian Champions League match this Wednesday against Sydney FC with a convincing two-nil victory over Ventforet Kofu. Brazilian temperamental striker Washington was his side's hero scoring a brace.

The tall Brazilian will be hoping to kick start his AFC career in a more positive manner after his public outburst in Urawa's 3-0 win over Persik Kediri in round 1 of the Asian Champions League.

Washington stormed down the player's tunnel after he was substituted but later apologised for his behaviour.

Roo flavour in A-League

A-League players take note: You may be used for the up and coming friendly clashes against Uruguay and Argentina.

This news has come in after a public outburst was heard by stars Mark Viduka, Tim Cahill, Brett Emerton, Craig Moore and Marco Bresciano who all may pull-out of both clashes.

Playing too many matches during the normal European season has taken its toll on these players and a couple more as a new headache has hit coach Graham Arnold in his preparations for this year's Asian Cup.

What we may see is Arnie select a couple of A-League boys with a few current Olyroos stars as back-up for the squad.

Haliti back in Australia

Former Newcastle United Jets' attacker Labinot Haliti has once again returned to Australia.

The Kosovo born player took a chance in playing in the Croatian First Division but things fell through the last minute where it is believed that the player's wages weren't what was said before he arrived in Croatia.

Haliti signed a contract with NSW Premier League club Sydney United prior to leaving for Europe in case any mishaps hap-

dressing sheds

by Mark
Stavroulakis

pened and fortunately for the 22-year-old, last season's champions recruited Labinot.

The Albanian national team showed a keen interest in wanting Haliti who started his first match for United last Wednesday in the club's 1-1 draw against Blacktown City Demons, but it is not known what their stance is at this point in time.

Reds chasing Victory duo

Adelaide United are set to continue it's off-field recruitment drive with the hope that they can lure Melbourne Victory duo Kristian Sarkies and Vince Lia to Hindmarsh Stadium for the new season.

The young Olyroos stars have been linked with a move to South Australia after failing to cement a starting spot in Ernie Merrick's championship winning squad this season.

Sarkies, a hot property in Australia, has also been linked with Perth Glory and a move to Germany and Holland.

Djite in Merrick's list

Olyroos and Adelaide United striker Bruce Djite has surely made a huge impact in his short career in the A-League, so much so he's already got Victory coach Ernie Merrick talking about possibly bringing him over to the 2006-2007 championship squad.

Currently tossing up whether to sign a new two-year deal with the Reds, Djite has left the rest of the work to his agent and the clubs.

"I want to stay in Adelaide but I will leave it up to the clubs and my manager to settle whether I remain here," Djite told The Advertiser last week.

Farina could have coached Sydney

Former Socceroos boss Frank Farina was set to be Sydney FC's coach prior to signing Branko Culina this season it was reported in the Leader last Friday.

It was reported in the local papers that Farina was offered a year with a 1-year option, but he wanted at least two years.

Currently coach the Queensland Roar, Farina refused to comment about the details

of this speculation but did say this to the Leader.

"At the end of the day I am very happy with the three-year deal I signed with Queensland Roar.

"We have the best facilities, including four training fields to choose from.

"I can see the club going from strength to strength." Culina has thus far impressed many on-lookers with his exciting attacking-brand of football and with more positive results, could well win himself the permanent position as coach of Sydney FC.

Neill angry with Blackburn fans

Australian defender Lucas Neill says he was disgusted by the reception he received from Blackburn fans during West Ham's 2-1 victory at his former club in the English Premier League.

"To be honest I was disgusted with that," Neill told the BBC.

"Five-and-a-half years at the club, 100 per cent commitment, I've never gone to the papers, never complained about anything and then, when I want to further myself for my own personal benefit, whether it be backwards, sideways or forward, I get the reception I get."

"I think it's disgusting because people have come here and been here only six months to a year, not worked hard, walked away with a pay-off, and here's me trying my heart out for five years and this is the reception I get, so I'm disappointed."

Holman enjoys 'under-dog' status

Current NEC Nijmegen striker Brett Holman is quite content hearing his club as being one of the under-dogs of the Dutch Eredivise.

NEC are currently stuck in the middle of the Eredivise ladder with many pundits predicting that Holman's side was one of the first teams to battle it out for relegation.

The current Socceroo has kept his goal scoring tally in tact having scored in the last couple of games for the club and has also grabbed rave reviews in the local Dutch



press about his performances on the pitch. Holman has been seen as one of Australia's most promising prospects in the attacking department and could be one of the new players set to lead the new Socceroos' attack in the Asian Cup later this year.

Esala Masi on fire

Remember former Fijian international and ex-NSL star Esala Masi?

The striker has been in Victoria for the past year playing out with local Victorian Premier League outfit Oakleigh Cannons but this season has grabbed massive headlines.

In three matches, the former Wolf has bagged five goals and has already stamped his claim as being one of the contenders of winning the Golden Boot award in Victoria.

Why Masi wasn't snapped up by any NSW Premier League side is quite simply mind-boggling.

Matildas now in 14th spot

The Australian women's football team have recorded their highest ever position in the latest FIFA world rankings.

On the back of a successful 2006, which saw them qualify for September's World Cup in China, and a clean sweep at last month's preliminary Olympic qualifiers, the Matildas moved up one spot to 14th - their highest position since the rankings began in July 2003.

The Matildas will commence the second stage of Beijing Olympic qualifiers next month where they have been drawn against North Korea, Taiwan and one of either South Korea or Hong Kong.

The World Cup draw will be held on April 22.

Pasfield ends Sydney FC career?

Rumours are flying thick and fast that young promising shotstopper Justin Pasfield has called time on his career with A-League side Sydney FC.

The second-string keeper, who had a contract with Sydney till the end of the Asian Champions League has apparently ended his ties with the club in the bid of playing weekly matches with NSW Premier League outfit Sydney United.

Reds coach Peter Papoythis was delighted to have heard that he was to get Pasfield on a full-time basis.

"He is one of the best keepers around and I think with more matches, he will improve more."

"He wasn't getting any game time at Sydney FC and at his age, you need to be playing as many matches as you can."

game will be broadcast live on television. And, to that, we say thank God.

Vale Alejandro Finisterre

Alejandro Finisterre may not be the most familiar name in the world. However, last week aged 87 he passed away. He was famous for inventing table soccer now played all around the world.

Finisterre, born in Spain, was buried under rubble by a bomb and was left lame and mutilated. His football career was over.

His love of table tennis inspired him to invent table soccer. He patented his invention in Barcelona in 1937.

Finisterre is believed to have played table soccer with Che Guevara in Guatemala in 1952. It is only one of many stories about his colourful life.

Finisterre was the editor of a literary magazine, had a degree in philosophy, and lived in France, Ecuador - where he founded a poetry magazine for Spanish exiles fleeing the Franco regime - Guatemala and Mexico, before returning to Spain.

He published more than 200 non-fiction and poetry books, but thought very little of his own poetry. Finisterre believed that poetry could revolutionise an unjust world and he dedicated his life to promoting the works of others.

The Moot Point

by Joe Russo

Radio Stars

Last week two Sydney FC players - Steve Corica and Mark Rudan - were invited into the studios of 2UE to participate in their highly successful Sports Tonight radio program hosted by former rugby league halfbacks Johnny Gibbs and Greg Alexander.

Both Corica and Rudan handled questions superbly, both from the hosts and a series of open-line callers. The players, just back from Shanghai, didn't avoid questions, even difficult ones about the club's turbulent year under Terry Butcher.

Corica and Rudan might just have a future in the media after their playing careers are over. Now, gentlemen, the real test will be when you appear on Sunday Night Soccer!

Stand, run, hop, skip...

"Time is running out to apply for media/photographer accreditation to Sydney FC's AFC Champions League home game versus J League title holder Urawa Red Diamonds...." stated the media release from Sydney FC media headquarters last week.

So TMP decided that we, too, should put our names in the hat. So we read on: "media representatives that wish to cover the big match must follow this simple, seven-step process." Say what? How many?

In summary it went something like this. Click this, paste that, stand on one leg for five minutes, click this, paste that, delete something, run around the block five times, click this, paste that...you get the drift.

In short, TMP is now exhausted and on life support trying to work it all out. The

Bridge confident of Olyroos success

By Ben Collins

Newcastle Jets' forward Mark Bridge is confident Australia's Under-23s will get their Olympic qualifying campaign back on track after failing to win either of their opening Round Two games.

The Olyroos drew 0-0 with Iran in Tehran last month and were held 1-1 by Jordan last Wednesday at Hindmarsh Stadium.

However, Bridge insists there is no need to panic as the Olyroos were hampered by freak conditions in Iran while Jordan snatched a late equaliser they did not deserve.

The Olyroos dominated in Adelaide yet only had a 58th-minute strike from Kristian Sarkies to show for their efforts and were denied the three points by a superb 30-metre strike from Jordan with just four minutes remaining.

"We played really well, passed the ball around well, and created a lot of chances," said Bridge. "We were definitely the better team."

"The equaliser was a wonderful goal. If you hit those balls sweetly they fly and keepers have no chance, but the score doesn't show what happened. We outplayed them so much they looked like a little club team."



Olyroos' lethal marksman Mark Bridge

"Iran was very difficult conditions," he added. "The day before the game we trained in snow - it was -1 in Iran and snowing."

"The next day the snow was gone but the field was still very hard to play on. It was rock hard but very slippery so you

were stuck if you wore studs or moulded (boots).

"It was also sticky so it was hard to pass the ball around and play the way we're used to playing. They're not a bad team but hopefully we can smash them back here in Oz."

Despite failing to get an early win under their belt, the Olyroos are second in Group D as Jordan and Iran have both suffered 1-0 defeats by Saudi Arabia.

The Olyroos host the Saudis in their next qualifier on March 28, and Bridge believes that no matter what happens against the group leaders, Australia have enough quality to progress.

"There's still four games to go and we're second because Saudi Arabia beat Iran 1-0 in the other game (on Wednesday)," he said.

"We still have to play the Saudis and see what they're like, but we're very comfortable with the other two teams. We know we're a better team, it's just a matter of finishing our chances."

The Olyroos must finish in the top two to advance to the third and final round of qualifiers, where 12 nations will be split into three groups with the winner of each group qualifying for Beijing 2008.



Huge South American clashes not so big!

(Continued from Front Page)

Quoted in the Sunday Telegraph last weekend, Mark Viduka is not for the Uruguay and Argentina matches in early June.

"It's fantastic to have such high-profile teams come to Australia and play against us (Socceroos), and it is nice that the FFA gains revenue from these matches with the big crowds expected to attend."

"Our (the players') concern is that of how many matches we play during our domestic seasons. Some players have not had a decent off-season rest since 2003."

"If our season (in England) finishes on May 14, we will have a two week break

until the two International Friendlies. Then there will be a one-month break between the Argentina match and the Asian Cup. Then it is back to our clubs," commented Viduka.

The strain on the European-based players is telling, and concerns now surface for the FFA who would certainly not want to field a weakened team against supposedly the Uruguayan and Argentinian top sides as the South American's prepare their Copa America campaign.

"If you haven't had a rest, like last year with the World Cup, a lot of players went straight back into pre-season and it was a mentally draining couple of months."

"With the break between the end of

the European domestic seasons and then the matches in Australia, players need to continue training hard in-order to avoid injury."

"Then the same in the weeks leading up to the Asian Cup. Otherwise we will be ridden with injuries."

"It leaves us all with no break at all," concluded Viduka.

Australia play Uruguay at Sydney's Telstra Stadium on June 2 before meeting Argentina at the MCG four days later in vital lead-up games to July's Asian Cup.

Australia begin their Asian Cup campaign against Oman in Bangkok on July 8.

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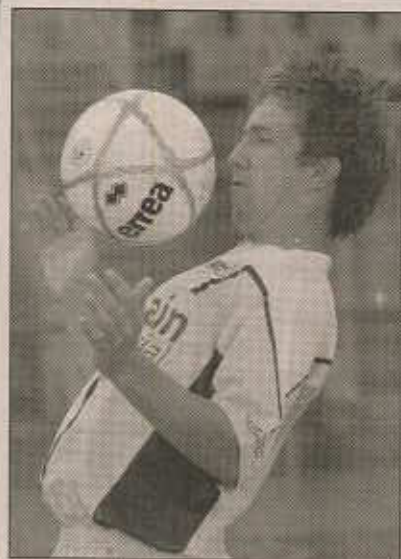
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"A person can't teach what he does not know nor lead where he does not go" - Anon



Marconi's Evan Berger

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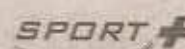
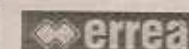
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BROCKIE ENDURES DOUBLE WHAMMY

By Marc Fox

Up-and-coming Kiwi international Jeremy Brockie hoped to have attracted the attentions of English Premier League clubs by this stage of his fledgling career, but the teenager now faces having to rebuild the hard way after being dumped by Sydney FC.

The former champions cited personal reasons for Brockie's sudden departure with Sydney chief executive George Perry saying, "We're sorry to see Jeremy go but we understand his reasons for wanting to leave and we won't stand in his way. He leaves with our best wishes."

The 19-year-old is understood to be homesick and that, combined with a distinct lack of first-team opportunities under former coach Terry Butcher and subsequently Branko Culina, means he heads back home to Nelson (NZ) after seeing out just half of the two-year deal he penned last March.

Brockie started just twice in Sydney colours after his swift defection from the beleaguered Knights, the last time back in late September.

A niggling back complaint and regular call-ups to New Zealand international get-togethers didn't aid his cause of forging a regular place in the starting XI of a side which struggled for goals and consistency during Butcher's early reign.

However, it's been an amazing fall from grace for the teenage striker who was a shining light for the Kiwi franchise in the league's inaugural season.

His raw power and pace was always likely to have brought the attentions of the league's stronger sides and he, now famously, told Fox Sports' Total Football

show that he wanted to be playing Premiership football within a couple of years. Sydney was just one of a handful of offers he received while the Knights dragged their heels and dallied over whether to re-sign him. By the time they had come to their senses, Brockie had been snapped up by then-coach Pierre Littbarski.



Former Sydney FC striker Jeremy Brockie will be hoping for a better season this year

But he never really fitted into Butcher's plans and wasn't helped by the Englishman's one-upfront policy where he lingered behind David Zdrilic, Sasho Petrovski and latterly Alex Brosque in the pecking order.

Brockie was then snubbed by Culina when the new coach named his opening Asian Champions League squad for the trip to Shanghai Shenhua.

He wasn't among the 16 players making the trip to China with even off-season recruit, Luka Glavas, given a chance ahead of Brockie.

A day later, news of Brockie's return to New Zealand was snuck onto a general media release regarding Sydney's ACL clash.

His immediate future is uncertain.

With the A-League instigating the four-foreigners rule from next season, some believe Brockie is now unlikely to be picked up by one of the seven Australian-based clubs, and certainly for no longer than a one-year agreement.

He has some time to mull over his overseas options while the European seasons build to a May climax but a lack of match sharpness will hurt him dearly and he would now almost certainly face the prospect of undergoing trials to prove his worth.

Brockie has fortunately remained in the frame for the All Whites with his name among All Whites coach Ricki Herbert's 20-man squad to take on Costa Rica and Venezuela on March 25 and 29.

He will also play a crucial role for New Zealand in the World Cup qualifiers starting in October, particularly given all-time leading scorer Vaughan Coveny's international retirement.

But his club ambitions hang in the balance. If the FFA veto the Wellington-based bid from a consortium backed by New Zealand Soccer - and instead give Tropical Football's Townsville project the green light - where would that leave Brockie?

The only saving grace might be that Kiwi footballing legend Wynton Rufer's name has already been pencilled in as coach of the North Queenslanders.



(L-R) Sydney FC will have to keep a look-out for Urawa Reds stars Washington, Yuki Abe and Shinji Ono this Wednesday evening

SYDNEY FACE CASHED UP CHAMPIONS

By Marc Fox

Yuki Abe, the most expensive player in Japanese domestic transfer history, is just one of the frightening names awaiting Sydney FC in this week's crucial Asian Champions League clash at Aussie Stadium.

The 25-year-old Abe is somewhat unheralded outside his homeland after missing out of the 2006 World Cup - and the chance of facing the

Socceroos in the tournament opener last June - despite having made his international debut under Zico back in early 2005. Indeed, surprisingly, for a player who cost in the region of US\$3 million when he joined Urawa Reds in January, the eye-catching midfielder has never even played a domestic fixture outside Japan before.

His name, although eminently memorable to foreign audiences, is one which has been lost on the mainstream footballing public outside Japan. Until now perhaps.

Born in Tokyo's outskirts in 1981, Abe quickly became one of the most recognisable players in JEF United's youth squad, his hometown club.

Quickly progressing through the ranks, he made his first term debut just a month shy of his 17th birthday before captaining the club to the 2005 and 2006 Japanese league cup titles.

In all, the deadball specialist scored 36 goals in 214 J-League matches for JEF.

It was only a matter of time before Abe, who almost joined Dutch club Heerenveen in the 2006 transfer window, craved a higher stage.

"The life of a soccer player is short and I want to face several challenges," Abe told reporters on his arrival at Urawa, the reigning J-League champions who completed the double by claiming the Emperors Cup.

"I'd also like to play against a foreign club." His wish was granted two weeks ago when he made his Asian Champions League debut in the comfortable 3-0 win over Indonesian champions Persik Kediri.

It was also the Saitama-based Diamonds' historic first-ever ACL involvement, and it couldn't have gone more to plan for them and their star signing, who filled in at centre-half for the absent Marcus

Tulio Tanaka, the league's reigning player-of-the-year.

Urawa took the lead in the 12th minute when Abe's shot was only parried by the Indonesian goalkeeper and former Japan international Nobuhisa Yamada coolly converted from close range.

Ex-Feyenoord midfielder Shinji Ono, who returned to the Diamonds for the 2006 season after beginning his career there, then went close as did Brazilian pair Robson Ponte and Washington before Yuchiro Nagai scored on the stroke of half-time.

Ono, a UEFA Cup winner during his five seasons in Holland, added a third late on.

As well as Abe, journeyman striker Washington is another name for Sydney to watch out for.

One of three Brazilian-born players in Urawa's squad, the 31-year-old didn't have the best of opening matches and was even forced to apologise for a vitriolic outburst when leaving the field after being replaced on the hour mark.

But Washington, a former Brazil international who scored three goals in 10 appearances and played in the 2001 Confederations Cup, remains the club's arch marksman.

He scored 26 goals in 26 games for the Diamonds last season.

The omens for Sydney, though, bode well.

Their form in the group opener against Shanghai Shenhua was their best for 12 months as they overturned the Chinese champions.

Despite Adelaide making last season's grand final, it was Sydney who started like Australia's No.1 club, in essence beating the side who then went on to defeat Adelaide's conquerors, Shandong Luneng, in the subsequent round of the Chinese Super League.

ROAR BUILDING FOR LONG-TERM

By Marc Fox

After locking in coach Frank Farina for another two seasons, Queensland Roar continue to build for their future by offering three local products similar deals.

It is a significant show of faith that the club has opted to add teenage strikers Robbie Kruse and Tahj Minniecon and midfielder Chris Grossman to their roster for both the 2007/08 and 2008/09 seasons.

The acquisitions of the talented trio - all Australian youth internationals - fill the three mandatory under-20 signings required under the new A-League system of allowing 23-man playing squads from next year onwards.

They join Olyroos Ben Griffin and Spase Dilevski in a young-looking Queensland group which now features six players aged 21 or under.

In-demand forward Dario Vidosic is the sixth member although the 19-year-old is currently in Germany undergoing a two-week trial with Bundesliga club Nuremberg.

Kruse, Minniecon and Grossman are all well known to the senior Roar squad after spending the bulk of last season training alongside the full-time players. But the promotion of the two 18-year-olds is a bold statement by coach Frank Farina given Queensland's goalscoring woes over the opening two seasons of the competition.

Neither have played in the top-flight before although Kruse came close to his A-League debut last season when he was called up as short-term cover for Vidosic.

At least Kruse, who can also operate in midfield, has experience with the Australian under-20s.

He was a mainstay of former boss Ange Postecoglou's side which qualified for last year's Asian Youth Championships but ultimately just missed out on selection for the travelling party to India.

Minniecon has so far only played for the under-17s, notably as part of the Australian team which won bronze at the Youth Olympics Festival in January.

Meanwhile, Grossman,

who turned 20 earlier this month, was described by Farina as a 'true box-to-box player' and is known to be a calm influence in the middle.

He started twice for the Roar in early December and made an impression in a roving midfield role after joining as cover for Marcus Wedau.

Unlike Kruse, Grossman did go to the Asian Youth Championships with the Young Socceroos and said his

new permanent employers were showing a commitment to local talent.

"It sends out a positive vibe that professional football is not out of reach for young Queenslanders," said Grossman.

"Whether you go through the system or play locally, Queensland Roar is there to provide a career path if you're good enough and dedicated enough. The fact that Robbie



One of Queensland Roar's emerging talents is midfielder Chris Grossman who was snapped up on a permanent deal with the A-League side



2007 TIGER TURF CUP Competition Draw



Round 1					
Team	Opposition	Day	Date	Time	TV
1 Epping YMCA	US RSL FC	Tuesday	3-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
2 Windsor Magpies	Epping Eastwood	Tuesday	3-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
3 West Pyrmont	Bankstown Sports Strikers	Tuesday	3-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
4 Bye	Dandaloo FC	Tuesday	3-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
5 West Pennant Hills Cherrybrook	Gymea United	Thursday	5-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
6 Bye	Cronulla RSL Youth Club	Thursday	5-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
7 Hurlstone Park Wanderers	Lugarno	Thursday	5-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
8 Picton Rangers	Northern Tigers	Thursday	5-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
Round 2					
Team	Opposition	Day	Date	Time	TV
9 Spirit FC	Roosters FC	Tuesday	17-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
10 Sydney Wanderers FC	Wentworthville FC	Tuesday	17-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
11 St George FC	Lakemba Sports	Tuesday	17-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
12 Springwood	Balmoral SC	Tuesday	17-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
13 Winner Future 5	Macarthur Rams	Tuesday	17-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
14 Greenfield FC	Wentworthville FC	Tuesday	17-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
15 Winner Future 1	Prospect United	Tuesday	17-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
16 UNSW	Hakoah	Thursday	19-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
17 Mt Pritchard	Wentworthville FC	Thursday	19-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
18 Canterbury Bankstown Berries	Ryde City	Thursday	19-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
19 Bayside Rams	Wentworthville FC	Thursday	19-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
20 Fraser Park FC	Hills Brumbies	Thursday	19-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
21 Winner Future 2	Hurlstone City Minstrels	Thursday	19-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
22 Winner Future 3	White City	Thursday	19-Apr	7:00 PM	TBC
Final 32					
Team	Opposition	Day	Date	Time	TV
23 Sydney Olympic	Winner Future 19	Tuesday	8-May	7:00 PM	TBC
24 Winner Future 18	Maribyrnong FC	Tuesday	8-May	7:00 PM	TBC
25 Rockdale City Suns	Burnsby White Eagles	Tuesday	8-May	7:00 PM	TBC
26 Winner Future 11	Mc Druitt Town Rangers	Tuesday	8-May	7:00 PM	TBC
27 Granville Rangers	Canterbury Bankstown Berries	Tuesday	8-May	7:00 PM	TBC
28 Winner Future 17	Wentworthville FC	Tuesday	8-May	7:00 PM	TBC
29 Fairfield City Lions	Blacktown City Demons	Tuesday	8-May	7:00 PM	TBC
30 Winner Future 12	Mercero Bulldogs	Tuesday	8-May	7:00 PM	TBC
31 Sydney University	Wentworthville FC	Thursday	10-May	7:00 PM	TBC
32 Sydney United FC	Stammar Hawks CS	Thursday	10-May	7:00 PM	TBC
33 Winner Future 15	Wentworthville FC	Thursday	10-May	7:00 PM	TBC
34 Bankstown City FC	Perrin Napsin United	Thursday	10-May	7:00 PM	TBC
35 AFA Leichhardt Tigers FC	Wentworthville FC	Thursday	10-May	7:00 PM	TBC
36 Winner Future 20	Wentworthville FC	Thursday	10-May	7:00 PM	TBC
37 PCHC Parramatta Eagles	Wentworthville FC	Thursday	10-May	7:00 PM	TBC
38 Wollongong Wolves	Wentworthville FC	Thursday	10-May	7:00 PM	TBC
Final 16					
Team	Opposition	Day	Date	Time	TV
39 Winner Future 34	Winner Future 30	Wednesday	23-May	7:00 PM	TBC
40 Winner Future 38	Winner Future 36	Wednesday	23-May	7:00 PM	TBC
41 Winner Future 28	Winner Future 25	Wednesday	23-May	7:00 PM	TBC
42 Winner Future 31	Winner Future 27	Wednesday	23-May	7:00 PM	TBC
43 Winner Future 33	Winner Future 29	Wednesday	23-May	7:00 PM	TBC
44 Winner Future 35	Winner Future 32	Wednesday	23-May	7:00 PM	TBC
45 Winner Future 34	Winner Future 32	Wednesday	23-May	7:00 PM	TBC
46 Winner Future 29	Winner Future 23	Wednesday	23-May	7:00 PM	TBC
Quarter Finals					
Team	Opposition	Day	Date	Time	TV
47 Winner Future 44	Winner Future 40	Wednesday	6-Jun	7:00 PM	TBC
48 Winner Future 39	Winner Future 43	Wednesday	6-Jun	7:00 PM	TBC
49 Winner Future 42	Winner Future 45	Wednesday	6-Jun	7:00 PM	TBC
50 Winner Future 46	Winner Future 41	Wednesday	6-Jun	7:00 PM	TBC
Semi Finals					
Team	Opposition	Day	Date	Time	TV
51 Winner Future 50	Winner Future 49	Sunday	17-Jun	1:00 PM	Seymour Shaw
52 Winner Future 48	Winner Future 47	Sunday	17-Jun	3:00 PM	Seymour Shaw
Grand Final					
Team	Opposition	Day	Date	Time	TV
53 Winner Future 51	Winner Future 52	Saturday	7-Jul	3:00 PM	Seymour Shaw
54 Winner Future 51	Winner Future 52	Saturday	7-Jul	5:00 PM	Seymour Shaw

Tiger Turf Cup set for kick-off

By Mark Stavroulakis

It's exciting times at Soccer NSW as teams prepare for the new and improved 2007 'Tiger Turf Cup' competition set to kick off on April 3rd.

Seen as New South Wales' answer to the English F.A. Cup, the competition is set to hit the ground running in a huge way.

Replacing the former Continental Tyres Cup (and also once known as the 'Waratah Cup'), 'The Tiger Turf Cup' has attracted a wealth of teams from all divisions hoping to compete against New South Wales' best.

This year a variety of Association based teams have entered the Cup, hoping to win through to the third round when the NSW Premier League teams are scheduled to enter the draw.

Round 1 will see all the Association based sides in action, some taking on State League clubs with the pick of the bunch seeing Illawarra Premier League side Picton Rangers taking on Winter Super League outfit Northern Tigers.

Epping YMCA take on Lilli Pilli, Miranda Magpies host Epping Eastwood while Bankstown Sports Strikers travel to West Pyrmont for their first match.

West Pennant Hills Cherrybrook face the Shire's Gympie United while finally Hurlstone Park Wanderers clash with Lugarno.

Both Dandaloo FC and Cronulla RSL Youth Club play out the bye.

The Round 2 draw already sees some mouth-watering clashes as Spirit FC take on Roosters FC, UNSW have been drawn against Hakoah, Scotty Baillie's Canterbury Bankstown Berries take on Ryde City while St George FC face Lakemba Sports.

The Final 32 draw has also been announced as both the NSW Premier League and Winter Super League outfits clash in the majority of the games.

This year the prize pool is \$50,000 with the winners taking home a handy \$16,000 and the runners-up \$6,000.

Tiger Turf indicated a keen interest in joining up with Soccer NSW in a bid to help them promote their FIFA approved artificial turf surfaces.

The connection between the two parties was immediately clear and as part of the sponsorship arrangement the 'Tiger Turf Cup' semi finals (June 17) and final (July 7th) will be held at Seymour Shaw, a perfect way in showing off Tiger Turf's impressive product.

BE AT THE 4TH JOHNNY WARREN GOLF CLASSIC



The Late Johnny Warren: former Australian World Cup Captain.

By John Economos

THURSDAY May 17th is the date of birth of former Australian World Cup captain, the Late Johnny Warren. It is also the date on which the 4th 'Johnny Warren Golf Classic' Tournament will be staged down at the picturesque hamlet of Jamberoo, a mere nine kilometres inland from the township of Kiama on the South Coast of NSW.

This annual event over the last three years has attracted almost 200 players, mostly former Soccer players and

many ardent supporters of the code.

Participating players over the years include former Australian International greats such as Ronnie Lord, Johnny Watkiss, Ray Baartz, Brian Smith, Jimmy Fraser, Dennis Yaager, Ray Richards naming a few.

These 'Johnny Warren Golf Classics' in the past have proven an outstanding success as former players and fans gather from all over NSW to catch up under a very nostalgic environment.

Cost for this wonderful day is \$80.00 per player and this includes your Golf fees, plus a sumptuous lunch and

drinks. Lunch and drinks ONLY costs \$35.00 per person. All parking is free of charge.

All players are requested to Tee-off at 8.30am sharp at the super-lush Jamberoo Golf Course.

Prizes are on offer for Best Net Score, Best Handicap and Nearest The Pin.

Do not miss out. It's a great day. For bookings please contact THIS WEEK, Ross or Nola on 02 4236 0119.

Proceeds of the day will go to the "Johnny Warren Football Foundation."

(See adjacent Advert). **BE THERE.**

You Are Invited

to

"The Johnny Warren Golf & Bowls Classic"

at

Jamberoo Golf Club & Jamberoo Bowling Club

Thursday 17th May 2007

Golf Tee Off @ 8.30am (shotgun start) Bowls at 10.00am

Golf fees plus Lunch and drinks provided at Jamberoo pub, \$80 per player. Lunch and drinks only, \$35 per person.

Golf 4 Person Ambrose Handicap

1ST PRIZE

Best Net score Handicap

Best Scratch Score

Nearest the Pin — Best 2nd shot on Par 4 — Longest Drive

Parking at the Pub, Club or Golf Course
Enquiries, ring Ross or Nola 4236 0119
Pub 4236 0270 • FAX 4236 0870



JOHNNY WARREN
FOOTBALL FOUNDATION

Proceeds to the
"Johnny Warren Football Foundation"
for development of elite 13/14 year old
footballers, male & female, in NSW



Golf and/or Bowls Entry Form

Golf or Bowls (Please circle)

Team Name:

Captain:

Ph # of Captain:

Player

Handicap

1.

2.

3.

4.

Due to the increasing popularity of event and to avoid disappointment, please return the Entry Form promptly.
The closing date is Thursday April 5, 2007.

Cost:

\$80 per person (\$320 per team)

Cost includes golf or bowls, lunch, drinks and souvenir Golf Cap.

\$35 per person (lunch and drinks only)

Please book numbers for lunch if not playing golf or bowls

Payment:

Cheque, money order or Credit Card

Card Details:

Card Type (please circle) Amex Visa Mastercard Diners

Card Number

Expire Date

Name on Card

Signature

Please return to:

RV Warren
12 Allowrie St,
Jamberoo, NSW 2533

Number of Lunch Guests:

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE FOXTEL CUP 2007

Diacio and De Moraes do the damage for South

South Melbourne has enjoyed their maiden win over Essendon by a margin of 2-0 at the Veneto Club, goals either side of half time to Ricky Diacio and Fernando De Moraes closing out a comfortable victory.

South's first goal came off the back of Essendon's best chance to score in the match. In the 34th minute Frank Catalano put in a cross from the left flank and Ismail Nazir outmanoeuvred the South defence, only to blaze over the bar from 10 yards. From the resulting goal kick the ball skidded into the path of Ricky Diacio, who shot first time from the top of the penalty area and into the bottom left corner of the net. South Melbourne took their 1-0 lead from the 35th minute through to half time without any risk of an equaliser being conceded.

Fernando De Moraes then won a corner in the 84th minute after forcing a good save from Marco Sutalo, and

after playing a short one-two from the set piece it was De Moraes who cracked the sealer from the left corner of the box. 2-0 to South Melbourne in the 85th minute, with De Moraes and his team-mates clearly delighted at sealing the points.

- Teo Pellizzeri

Late Masi goal denies Georgies victory

A stoppage time equaliser from the irrepressible Esala Masi has salvaged a point for Oakleigh Cannons against Sunshine Georgies at Jack Edwards Reserve.

Masi, with five goals already this season, underlined why he is currently the competition's premier striker as he maintained Oakleigh's unbeaten season.

Sunshine opened a two-goal cushion through Anthony Magnacca and Vasko Trpceviski late in the first half. Anthony Pelikan pulled a goal back mid-way through the second half before Masi snatched a share

of the spoils.

Oakleigh coach Stuart Munro was heartened by the result after a disappointing first half. "The second half was more like us," Munro said. "As I said to the players, I wasn't delighted with the second half performance because that is what we expect from them."

Curcija was free in the box for a header but failed to get any power on the ball, sending it across the face to Sash Becvinovski. Becvinovski was given time on the ball to cross back to Curcija at the left hand post, and still unmarked, the gun striker made no mistake with a right footed volley.

57th minute Marinos Gasparis worked down the right flank and sent in a cross deep to Blaze Gorgioski at the left hand post. Gorgioski was unable to get a shot on the target, but his bring down fell into the path of Tony Sterjovski, who slid in and goaled from close range to give Preston a 3-2 lead.

The goal failed to break Altona's resolve however, and in the 65th minute the Magic hit back again. Sash Becvinovski bustled through the right side of the penalty area onto a long and bouncing ball from Goran Taleviski. Becvinovski struck right footed to the near post and beat a diving Lupce Aveviski high into the net. A fantastic finish to earn Altona's second equaliser of the night, 3-3.

- Teo Pellizzeri

Richmond roll on at Springvale

Richmond has snared their second win of the season with a 2-0 win away to Springvale White Eagles. The result leaves the White Eagles without a FOXTEL Cup point, while Richmond are nestled near the top of the table.

The visitors win came courtesy of goals to Joe Di Iorio and Xhezair Sulemani on either side of half-time.

Springvale earned the ire of the referee, racking up four yellow cards though out the game.

- Mark van Aken

Heidelberg prevail in battle of two halves

In a veritable game of two halves, Heidelberg has helped itself to what appeared early on to be an improbable win, second half goals to Nick Marinos and Andy Vlahos sealing the win before a late Kristijan Ivesic goal restored some respect to the score-line for Green

Gully.

After a first half of total dominance for Green Gully, punctuated by a series of rueful missed goal-scoring opportunities, the Warriors came out blazing in the second half to eventually wrestle back the ascendancy and take a match-winning two goal lead.

Almost instantly after the re-start Gully would be made to pay for their opening half failures when Nick Marinos took advantage of a Tomas Kovar howler. The usually polished keeper failed to deal with a seemingly innocuous knock into the 18 yard box and Marinos was on hand to score the most opportunistic of goals.

Pena and Nikolic came off in a double switch for Gully on the hour, replaced by Matthew Sanders and Kiwi Campbell Banks. It would be the Warriors however that would next have an impact on the score board when Andy Vlahos drove home a ripping 35 metre wonder-strike to give the visitors an unlikely 2-0 advantage.

Gully's hopes were fading until second half substitute Kristijan Ivesic brought the encounter back to life in the dying minutes with a coolly headed goal from a Medjedovic cross from open play. The home side couldn't restore parity however, and Heidelberg collected their first win of the campaign two goals to one.

Pilic brace does the job for Fawkner

Fawkner recorded its second consecutive FOXTEL Cup win on Sunday, at home to Kingston City.

David Pilic was the hero for the Blues, netting a pair of goals in the last twenty minutes of action to gift his side a 2-0 victory over the Reds. The win will be a con-

fidence builder for Luc Trani's side that has hit the ground running thus far.

Knights, Wests play out scoreless draw

Both Melbourne Knights and Western Suburbs remain winless this season, after a 0-0 draw in front of a 1500 strong crowd at Knights Stadium.

While Knights had the better of the chances, neither side ever really took control of a game punctuated by errors.

Both sides had chances late in the half, first with Western Suburbs captain Terry Antonidis heading Lorenz Kindtner's cross straight at Knights goalkeeper Adrian Cagalj.

Then just before the half time whistle, Knights defender Steve Iosifidis forced a good save from Gal with a powerful long range effort.

The Knights continued to press forward as the second half progressed, searching for a winning goal, but their midfield was never able to attack with real fluency.

In the 75th minute, Knights thought they should have had a penalty, when Mate Dugandzic appeared to be brought down just on the edge of the box, only for the referee to wave play on.

Wests coach Michael Chatzitrifonas was pleased to come out of a difficult game with something to show for it. "To come here and get a point from a club as big as the Knights, I was pretty pleased with that. Its good to get the monkey off the back," Chatzitrifonas said after the game. Lachlan Taylor

Monday Night Football was at Epping Stadium between Whittlesea Zebras and the AIS - check-out www.footballfedvic.com.au for match action.



Richmond striker Xhezair Sulemani celebrates the winner against Springvale White Eagles SC (Photo by John Punshon)

"We just kept pushing and pushing hoping we'd get a break and it came. I always knew we'd be in it in the second half, it was just a case of could we get the goals back and we did."

- Chris Vernuccio

Six-goal classic at Paisley Park

Old rivals Altona and Preston have played out an entertaining 3-3 draw at Paisley Park. Preston led by as much as two goals and up 3-2 in the second half, only for Altona to peg them back on both occasions.

Preston started the scoring from kickoff, netting the opener within sixty seconds. An early Preston corner was cleared from a big pack to Pece Siveski at the top of the penalty area. Striking with his right from from 20 yards, Siveski's dipping shot hit the back of the net, past the outstretched right hand of Bojo Jedjevic.

Shortly after it was 2-0 to the Lions when Steven Pace played a ball from deep in midfield through the centre of the park. Blaze Gorgioski ran onto the ball, taking it into the penalty area, coolly finishing with his right foot, giving Preston a 2-0 lead in the 16th minute.

But the advantage didn't last, when in the 17th minute, Altona scored their first goal and pegged back the margin just a minute later. Michael

The Magic then levelled the scores in the 42nd minute when an unthreatening ball drifted into the penalty area and over a pack, Lupce Aceviski was first to the ball and seemingly about to collect. But Fidell Richards closed unexpectedly for Altona and Aceviski flapped one handed at the ball without taking possession. Richards ran straight at the ball and knocked it away from Aceviski's grasp, presenting the simplest tap in for a 2-2 scoreline.

After half time the pace of the game increased and the scoring didn't stop. In the

FOXTEL CUP



Football Federation Victoria - FOXTEL CUP

ROUND THREE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
1 South Melb	3	2	1	0	8	5	3	7
2 Oakleigh Cannons	3	2	1	0	6	4	2	7
3 G.G. Cavaliers SC	3	2	0	1	5	2	3	6
4 Richmond SC	3	2	0	1	6	4	2	6
5 Fawkner Blues SC	3	2	0	1	4	2	2	6
6 Altona Magic SC	3	1	2	0	5	4	1	5
7 Whittlesea Zebras	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	4
8 Essendon Royals SC	3	1	1	1	3	3	0	4
9 Heidelberg Utd SC	3	1	1	1	5	6	-1	4
10 A.I.S.	2	1	0	1	2	2	0	3
11 Kingston City FC	3	1	0	2	6	7	-1	3
12 S'shine Georgies SC	3	0	2	1	3	5	-2	2
13 Melb Knights SC	3	0	2	1	2	4	-2	2
14 Western Suburbs SC	3	0	1	2	0	3	-3	1
15 Springvale WE SC	3	0	0	3	0	4	-4	0
16 Preston Lions SC	3	0	2	1	4	5	-1	-1

ROUND THREE RESULTS

Essendon Royals 0 South Melbourne 0, Oakleigh Cannons 2 Sunshine Georgies 2, Springvale White Eagles 0 Richmond 2, Altona Magic 3 Preston Lions 3, Fawkner Blues 2 Kingston City 0, Green Gully Cavaliers 1 Heidelberg United 2, Melbourne Knights 0 Western Suburbs 0.

ROUND FOUR FIXTURES

Friday 23 March 2007

Richmond v Essendon Royals
Kingston City v Altona Magic

Sunday 25 March 2007

South Melbourne v Green Gully Cavaliers
Heidelberg United v Oakleigh Cannons
Sunshine Georgies v Melbourne Knights
Western Suburbs v Fawkner Blues
Preston Lions v A.I.S.

Monday 19 March 2007

Whittlesea Zebras v Springvale White Eagles

CHECK OUT WWW.FOOTBALLFEDVIC.COM.AU FOR FULL FIXTURE DETAILS



Fawkner Blues' David Pilic shown scoring for the home side against Kingston City (Photo by www.dannypphoto.com.au)

Parisi enjoying Premier League

By Joseph Carlucci

Having vested the jerseys of Sydney United and Sydney Olympic in the old National Soccer League, along with those of both Newcastle Jets, and briefly the New Zealand Knights, 24-year-old striker Franco Parisi has made a move into the NSW Premier League, with Leichhardt based A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers.

The athletic striker, vesting no less than the number 10 jersey for A.P.I.A. this season, has made an immediate impact at his new club, although there was a slight hiccup in the process.

A fantastic pre-season run, where the A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers clinched the prestigious Johnny Warren Cup trophy, laid the platform for what was meant to be a huge start to the season, although not all aspects of a football team fall smoothly into place.

A.P.I.A. incurred a horrendous

first-up loss in the NSW Premier League, a 4-0 thumping at the hands of Sydney Olympic, signaling all was not rosy despite the Pre-Season form guide.

Matters were made worse for Franco Parisi, as the A.P.I.A. number 10 was given a red-card for retaliating to a series of hard challenges by his opponents, the decision a four match suspension for the striker's efforts.

After the club pleaded Parisi's case, and the player's clean prior record, Parisi was granted clemency, having the four match suspension reduced to one.

Parisi served the one-match ban in Round 2 against Sydney United, a 1-1 draw away from home, and made a return in the eagerly awaited "Italian Derby" at Lambert Park against Marconi Stallions.

In a match passionately anticipated by players and fans alike, Parisi demonstrated his worth, leading his side to victory, and turning the direction of A.P.I.A.'s poor start to the sea-

son.

"It was great to get the win against Marconi (ten days ago)," commented Parisi to Sydney Radio 98.5 FM's Sunday Night Soccer.

"That particular 2-0 result proved that we are capable of scoring goals, but equally capable of keeping our opponents out, so I believe that it will act as a confidence booster to the team after the slow start to the League season for us.

"As so far as the suspension goes, we put a lot of effort into appealing the decision, so I am glad that I was able to re-pay my Club by playing well today, and helping the team get the three points."

A.P.I.A.'s season has taken a turn for the better, and after the disappointment felt by the Club last season after finishing in last place, Parisi believes this A.P.I.A. side is more than capable of not only challenging for the title, but going all the way.

"I believe we can go all the way. Once we have our top team available,

with every player then fighting for their positions, I believe we have a good unit and we can beat any team in the competition if we play to our strengths. We can overcome any obstacle," added Parisi.

Parisi's pre-season was certainly a special one this season, as the former Newcastle Jets' and New Zealand Knights' man played, and trained, with the Legendary Gianfranco Zola.

"That was a tremendous experience. He (Zola) is such a great guy, on and off the field. On the field his touches are simply brilliant, as all supporters of the game have seen of him throughout his career, meanwhile off the field he is a humble man.

"He always made time to sign autographs, do interviews and simply just be available to so many people that have admired him throughout his career," said Parisi.

Parisi's involvement with the A-League has not gone unnoticed, as the 24-year-old has been impressed with how the League has unfolded over



A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers' quick-fire star striker Franco Parisi (right) in action against Manly United during this season's Johnny Warren Cup tournament

PAUL BENTVELZEN TO LEAD SOCCER NSW'S HIGH PERFORMANCE UNIT

In a bold new initiative, Soccer NSW have set up a High Performance Unit under the leadership of Paul Bentvelzen.

Bentvelzen was previously in charge of Coerver Coaching, the official grassroots development program for Soccer NSW. Tony Judge will now assume that position.

Bentvelzen will now expand his role to include coach education, player pathways (for both boys and girls), schools development, state teams, Coerver coaching and special events and initiatives such as indigenous and disability programs.

The role of the High Performance Unit will be to implement grassroots and elite junior development programs that

will increase both the participation and standard of play in NSW.

The unit is the brainchild of Soccer NSW Chief Executive Officer Michael Quarmby who has restructured the coaching area following the departure of Branko Culina.

"Our role is to match up the international standard of youth development through cutting edge youth programs aimed to improve the quality of play with our young players in preparation of international football."

The High Performance Unit will launch in July 2007 with new 'Pathway Programs'; "an initiative that clearly define to the soccer market place for both boys and girls the pathway that players from the age of seven through to selection to the national team.

In essence the long term goal is to dramatically increase the standard of players through cutting edge youth development programs and coach education with

the performance measure of maximising the number of NSW players representing the national teams in both boys and girls.



Paul Bentvelzen (pictured far left) has been given a higher role in the development of football in NSW

the first two seasons.

"It is a lot more professional. The media coverage is great, people are talking about it and it has just created a huge buzz.

"As so far as the playing standard goes, well yes it is physically a lot stronger, and that just comes with the fact that teams are now professional, giving teams and players the chance to reach a higher level of professionalism, and standard."

Europe has also been part of Parisi's young career, as the Sydney-sider spent some time in Italy, Holland and England, adding to the character of the player we see today taking to the field for the A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers.

"The experiences abroad were great. It is a different ball game there. Football in Europe is part of their life. It is everything. Everyone lives football and that is why the players are so passionate about the game.

"Experiencing this sort of environment helped me.

"I started at AC Milan when I was 17-years-old. That was my best experience. The technical side of the game is amazing there. Holland was great. They too are huge on the technical aspect of football, and Holland is a great place for a player to start his professional career."

Parisi also spent time in England with Tottenham Hotspurs.

"The experience at Tottenham was also big. England has that physical side to their football. From a spectacle side, English football is wonderful. Though, leaning toward my own characteristics, I have to say that my time in Holland and Italy was more preferable, due to the style of play employed by the teams in those countries," added Parisi.

Franco Parisi's future ambitions revolve around A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers for the moment. The striker's aims are to play well for A.P.I.A., score as many goals as possible and help lead the side to the title.

"It is all about doing well with A.P.I.A. for now. At the moment I am not looking too far. I want to concentrate on my Club for now, do the best I can and then see if anything more comes out of it then.

"I wouldn't rule out A-League or even going overseas. I would love to do that, though for now I must concentrate on my Club and look to do the best I can there," concluded Parisi.

The A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers face Blacktown City Demons this weekend (Sunday) at Lambert Park.

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BRISBANE Premier League

DUAL LEAGUE LEADERS REMAIN ON TOP

By Glenn Davis

Palm Beach and Rochedale Rovers remained the only two sides to maintain a perfect start to the season with maximum points in two cliff hanger results in the Brisbane Premier League last weekend.

A double from Palm Beach striker Matt Hilton guided his side to a hard fought 2-1 away win against bottom placed Taringa Rivers while Rochedale edged out Brisbane City 4-3 in a Spencer Park thriller.

In other matches, Souths scored the biggest win of the season with a 7-nil away thrashing over newly promoted Ipswich Knights while Pine Rivers collected its first win of the season downing Mitchelton 2-1.

The other promoted side Peninsula Power also earned its first point of the season with a late equaliser in a 3-all home draw against Mt. Gravatt while Brisbane Strikers had a comfortable 3-nil win at home against Brisbane Wolves.

At Jack Speare Park, Palm Beach endured tough ground conditions and an early setback when Taringa opened the scoring in the 15th minute through striker Matt Edwards.

Palm Beach, who won its previous two round matches, lifted its performance markedly after the setback and put Taringa under sustained pressure midway through the first period.

Eventually, the visitors were rewarded with the equaliser midway through the first term when a cross from Daniel Fung enabled Matt Hilton to score the first of a double.

Hilton proved a hero for Palm Beach after the break when he volleyed home the

winner from close range after a corner was partly cleared by Taringa's keeper Lloyd Kildey.

Taringa, who are now languishing at the foot of the table with no points, missed a golden chance for the equaliser with five minutes remaining.

After being released down the right flank, Brad Lacey sent in a cross for striker Josh Purton, who rushed his attempt and skied the ball over the crossbar from close range.

Taringa coach Alan Waller took one positive from his side's third defeat.

"The positive we take from this game was that at least we're finishing off our games strongly and often are on top of our opponents," Waller said.

"We're now officially bottom of the table but we've been defending well against the top sides like Rochedale and Palm Beach.

"The problem for us is we're not taking our chances.

"Towards the end we could have gone on the attack looking for the equaliser but against Palm Beach we could easily have opened up like a can of worms."

Palm Beach coach Adem



Taj Kuma opened the scoring for the Brisbane Strikers in their three-nil victory over the Brisbane Wolves

Poric was delighted to leave Taringa with maximum points.

"We played well in patches but the second half was a bit scrappy," Poric said.

"We got away with it in the end as it's not hard to play on their pitch.

"We've won all three games so far but we haven't hit our peak yet."

Souths maintained its unbeaten start inflicting a humiliating 7-nil trashing over Ipswich Knights at Eric Evans Reserve on Saturday night.

Ipswich, one of the newly promoted sides to premier league, trailed 4-nil at half time in a game which proved embarrassing to both the club and coach Joe Fenech.

Fenech is now hoping his side can quickly learn from the experience as they rebuild and start the season over again as they prepare for Rochedale Rovers next week.

"We gave away too many soft goals in the first half and you just can't do that," Fenech said.

"It was an emphatic win for Souths and they simply outplayed us.

"Their skills were better than ours on the night and it was embarrassing for the club and to me.

"But it'll be back to the drawing board on Tuesday night to prepare for Rochedale.

"We could have scored a goal or two but we didn't deserve it."

Souths' opened the scoring in the 15th minute when Adam Hayward caught the Ipswich defence flat-footed before slotting home.

Fenech said Ipswich were caught out trying to play the offside trap which enabled Souths midfielder Ben Evans to tuck home the visitor's second 10 minutes later.

Striker Ramone Close got the first of a hat-trick for the

visitors on the half hour before Souths went to the half time break with a fourth from striker Jaspel Binning.

The second half was much the same with Souths dominating possession and little fighting spirit from Ipswich.

Midfielder Hayden Beale slotted home the fourth for Souths on the hour before Close picked up his second five minutes later and his hat-trick with 15 minutes remaining.

Souths' coach Graham Hayward was delighted with the decisive victory but even more pleased not to concede a goal.

"We tore them apart from the start and at no stage did they put us under any pressure," Hayward said.

"We could have easily scored more but the big news for us is we've just signed three players from the Australian Institute of Sport."

At Wendy Alison Park, Pine Rivers finally produced the form of previous years to collect its first victory with a hard fought win over Mitchelton.

After losing its opening two rounds, Pine Rivers played some inspired football in the first half but could only go to the break leading 1-nil.

The first half game breaker came from Daniel Dacey, who pounced in a goal mouth scramble to slot home from the penalty spot.

The home side increased its lead to 2-nil on the hour when Neil Reid won an aerial duel from a corner heading the ball into the path of midfielder Leon Dwyer who made no mistake.

Despite trailing 2-nil, Mitchelton picked up its intensity and managed to reduce



Matt Hilton bagged a double for Palm Beach in their two-one win over the Taringa Rovers

Pine Rivers' lead within two minutes of conceding their second setback.

Mitchelton had been building sustained pressure and finally capitalised from a short corner with striker Nick Kuyper finishing off with a powerful header.

Mitchelton sensed an equaliser was well within reach and kept the attack up to the home side but were unable to break down a solid Pine Rivers defence.

Pine Rivers' coach John Rhule was delighted to register his first win as a premier league coach.

"Mitchelton caused us a few problems and pressured us a lot from corners," Rhule said.

"I thought we played some very good football in the first half but we lost our way after the break.

"We've got a very inexperienced side and we had four players under 18 on the park.

"These players don't have the experience in premier league and sometimes they go

hiding but they're learning very week."

Rhule conceded Mitchelton was unlucky not to add to its scoreline.

"They could have had a couple of goals but overall I thought we deserved to get something from the game and to get three points was great."

"We lost 2-1 to Palm Beach last round and I thought we deserved to get a point from that game as well."

Mitchelton coach Greg Brown was disappointed with his side's mental attitude on the night.

"We were very disappointing and didn't play until after they scored their second but by then it was too late," he said.

"We were a bit undermanned but our attitude was very poor which we'll need to sort out."

At Kelly Field, a late equaliser from midfielder Shaun Feuerriegel enabled Peninsula Power to collect its first point in a thrilling 3-all draw.

Peninsula Power looked set to pick up all three points after a strong first half performance when it raced to a 2-nil lead but allowed the visitors to claw its way back to go to the half time break at 2-all.

The home side got off to a

brilliant start inside the first 10 minutes when striker Sean Blackman hit a screamer from 30-metres for a 1-nil lead.

A corner from Steve Foreshaw midway through the opening period set up striker Paul Allen who headed home for a crucial two goal buffer for Peninsula Power.

Despite the two setbacks, Mt Gravatt rallied to reduce the deficit on the half hour when midfielder Jason Eacott scored a scrappy goal.

Mt. Gravatt's equaliser came after a strong team build up in the centre of the park enabled Ben Cavanough to cut back for Graham Davidson to slot home.

Peninsula, who had played strongly throughout the game, suffered a major blow in the 75th minute when Cavanough ran at the Power defence before rifling home a 30-metre shot which took a slight deflection into the net.

Power coach Steve Faulkner was staring down the barrel of yet another defeat with five minutes remaining when Feuerriegel popped up with the equaliser for a deserved share of the spoils.

Faulkner believed his side was unlucky not to collect its first win of the season.

"We played very well but I suppose it was a fair result," he said.

"I thought we were headed for a 3-2 loss towards the end but it would have been an injustice.

"On the number of chances in the game we were the better side and could have won."

Mt. Gravatt coach Karl Herdle admitted his side gave away too much possession and can sense a weakness in his side's defence.

"We were a bit scrappy and gave away the ball too much," Herdle said.

"On average you should win games when you lead 2-nil so that tells me we must have a defensive problem."

QLD Premier League Ladder Round 3

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	D	Pts
Rochedale Rovers	3	3	0	0	9	4	5		9
Palm Beach	3	3	0	0	7	4	3		9
Souths United	3	2	1	0	13	4	9		7
Brisbane Strikers	3	2	0	1	6	2	4		6
Ipswich Knights	3	1	1	1	4	10	-6		4
Mt Gravatt	3	0	3	0	6	6	0		3
Brisbane Wolves	3	1	0	2	4	5	-1		3
Mitchelton	3	1	0	2	4	5	-1		3
Pine Rivers	3	1	0	2	4	6	-2		3
Brisbane City	3	0	2	1	5	6	-1		2
Peninsula Power	3	0	1	2	4	9	-5		1
Taringa Rovers	3	0	0	3	4	9	-5		0

Round 3 Results

Peninsula Power 3 **Mt Gravatt 3**
 (Allen, Blackman, Feuerriegel) (Davidson, Cavanough, Eacott)

Half-time 2-2

Ipswich Knights 0 **Souths United 7**
 (Close 3, Hayward, Evans, Benning, Beale)

Half-time 0-4

Taringa Rovers 1 **Palm Beach 2**
 (Edwards) (Hilton 2)

Half-time 1-2

Pine Rivers 2 **Mitchelton 1**
 (Dacey, Dwyer) (Kuyper)

Half-time 1-0

Brisbane City 3 0 **Rochedale 4**
 (Schafeld, Papadopoulos, Christensen) (Smits, Grossman, Thomas 2)

Half-time 1-2

Brisbane Strikers 3 **Brisbane Wolves 0**
 (Kuma, Panic, Davani)

Half-time 2-0

FIXTURES

Round 4

Saturday 24th March

Mitchelton v Taringa Rovers
 Mt Gravatt v Brisbane Wolves
 Palm Beach v Brisbane City
 Pine Rivers v Brisbane Strikers
 Souths Utd v Peninsula Power

Sunday 25th March

Rochedale Rovers v Ipswich Knights

JORDAN STUN OLYROOS

The Under 23s have been denied a win by a remarkable long-range goal four minutes from full time in their Beijing Olympic qualifying match against Jordan at Hindmarsh Stadium in Adelaide.

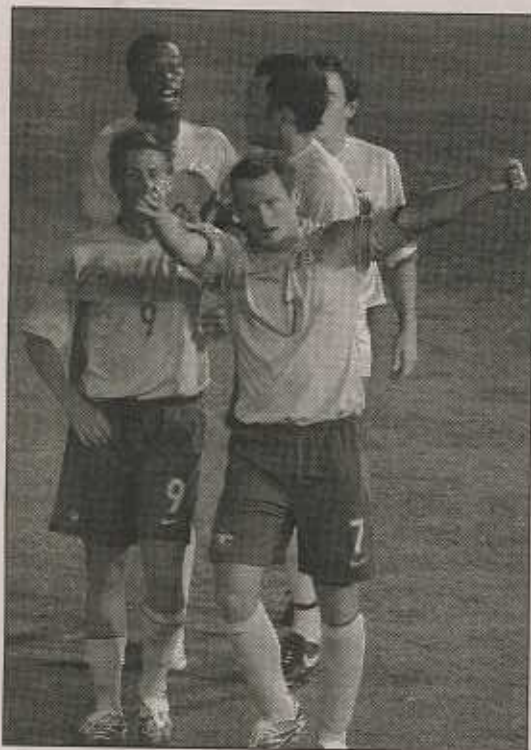
Midfielder Ahmad Alzugheir struck a blistering 30-metre equaliser to cancel out Kristian Sarkies 58th minute goal and ensure the match finished 1-1.

Australia looked likely victors striking the frame of the goal on three occasions, while at the other end of the field Australian goalkeeper Danny Vukovic was rarely called into action. Vukovic debuting as captain in place of regular skipper Mark Milligan who was omitted on match day as a precautionary measure with a hamstring complaint.

The Under 23s struck the frame of the goal on three occasions in the second half but were unable to secure the crucial second goal.

Sarkies was the first to hit the crossbar with a superb free kick after 53 minutes, only to then score five minutes later finishing off fine lead-up work from Mark Bridge and Bruce Djite.

Substitute Troy Hearfield



Kristian Sarkies celebrates his goal against Jordan for the Olyroos

hit the underside of the crossbar within minutes of entering the fray late in the match while Adrian Leijer's glancing header also hit the top of the bar with two minutes remaining.

The result leaves Australia on two points following their opening round scoreless draw

against Iran in Tehran a fortnight ago.

The top two teams will progress to the third and final stage of qualifying, where 12 nations will be split into three groups.

The third stage will be held from August 22 - November 21, with only the three group

winners representing Asia at the Beijing Olympic Games.

Meanwhile, Baan says he would like to have senior players such as Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka at his disposal, should the Olyroos qualify for the Beijing Olympics.

If the Olyroos advance past the qualifying rounds, they are allowed to select three over-age players in their squad for Beijing.

Tim Cahill, John Aloisi and Craig Moore represented Australia via this ruling at the Athens Games in 2004.

Baan said football should be no different to other Olympic sports in having the best players available.

"When you qualify for Beijing, let's say the real Olympics, you should bring the best athletes, as it is in all the other sports," he said.

The Olyroos continue their campaign to make Beijing with the upcoming fixture against Saudi Arabia, and then the return matches against Iran, Jordan and again, Saudi Arabia.

Baan will have Olyroos' captain Mark Milligan and Melbourne Victory defender Adrian Leijer available after both recovered from injuries.

Baan said Milligan had

almost completely recovered from a hamstring strain.

"He said to me that he feels okay, there is a little risk always with this kind of injury," he said.

Olyroos Fixtures

Match Day 3 - (Home)

Wednesday 28 March 2007

Australia v Saudi Arabia
Hindmarsh Stadium,
Adelaide

Match Day 4 - (Away)

Wednesday 18 April 2007

Saudi Arabia v Australia
Dammam

Match Day 5 - (Home)

Wednesday 16 May 2007

Australia v Iran
Hindmarsh Stadium,
Adelaide

Match Day 6 - (Away)

Wednesday 6 June 2007

Jordan v Australia
Venue to be confirmed

PAPOYTHIS READY FOR UNITED CHALLENGE



By Mark Stavroulakis

It's been a tough start to Peter Papoythis' coaching career with last season's NSW Premier League champions Sydney United.

With a number of injuries and suspensions that have hit the Edensor Park squad, the 'Flea' as he is known by his fellow peers has faced an uphill battle in keeping the same squad consistent weekly.

ABSW Editor Mark Stavroulakis caught up with Papoythis and asked him a series of questions about his time thus far in the Sydney United hot-seat.

MS) It's been a bit of an up and down season with Sydney United, you guys finished in the 3rd-4th playoffs of the Johnny Warren Cup but you've had a tough start to backing up for a hopeful back to back championship in the NSW Premier League, what's been your take on that?

PP) In our first game against Blacktown, we were up one-nil till lightning struck and the game was postponed. We were looking quite good till that point. The bad thing about the postponement was that we didn't get to play a game, most of our players had not played for two weeks some of them three, so when we met an in-form A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt side we lacked cohesion and shape.

The week after, we did well until half-time against Bankstown as the score was even but then some Daniel Severino brilliance and the sending off of Ante Juric ended our chances of beating a red-hot Bankstown City.

A few days ago we re-

visited the postponed Blacktown game without Ante Juric, Mile Jedinak and Ben Vidaic who were all suspended.

We also had Anthony Doumanis, Milan Bosnar, Peter Zorbas and Mitchell Thompson injured so it seemed like we had an uphill battle.

The boys dug deep and I gave five players their debut appearances in the Premier League.

We all pulled together and produced a great performance - almost getting the three points but it was unfortunate that we suffered a last minute equaliser preventing us from taking home the three points.

MS) Suspensions and injuries have taken its toll, what's the current situation with that?

PP) Jedinak will be back this week but Juric and Vidaic are still suspended.

Doumanis will be out for a further two-three weeks while Bosnar and Zorbas may sit out a week or two.

For Thompson, his injury seems like it will sideline him indefinitely.



Sydney United coach Peter Papoythis ponders his next move

MS) Will you be looking towards buying any more players for your squad when the window re-opens soon?

PP) When the transfer window re-opens, yes, we will be searching for a few new players.

MS) Which players

could you say have been stand-outs for the side?

PP) It's too early in the season to name stand-outs but I'll keep you posted on that.

MS) What's been the difference in stepping up from your former role as an assistant coach to being the manager of one of the leading teams in the competition?

PP) I take this responsibility very seriously as I have taken all of my previous assisting roles.

I am very passionate about football, there is no difference in the responsibilities of the two roles except that the gravity of this new role is subjective. The buck stops at me, the ultimate decisions are made by me and that is a very big responsibility.

There is great honour in managing Sydney United and I am proud to be in this role, supported by the club, the board, the players and the community.

I will do my best to ensure that I do not fail the club, the players or myself.

MS) Does talk of facing the chop scare you?

PP) In my twenty years as a football professional the rumours about job security, position security and player security have always been rife. It's healthy for discussion around this game to be robust and passionate. I know where I stand and I know that I will do everything I can to be successful and as long as I develop players with the same ambition and motivation, my job as a professional football coach is secure no matter what.

MS) Finally, what can we expect from United in the next few weeks?

PP) We will continue to work hard and harder, focus on getting the players back from injury/suspension, focus on fluency in our game and finally, overcoming the issues caused by the chopping and changing of the players in our game.

SOCCEEROOS SQUAD READY FOR CHINA

A chance to clinch a spot in Australia's 2007 AFC Asian Cup squad is up for grabs with a 20-man Soccerroos team named for the international against China to be played in Guangzhou on 24 March.

"This is the last game before the squad assembles in Sydney ahead of the matches against Uruguay and Argentina so there is a big opportunity for players to show they deserve a place in the Asian Cup squad," said National Coach Graham Arnold.

"We need to continue to build depth, not just for the Asian Cup but also as we look ahead to the 2010 World Cup qualifying campaign."

Arnold said that as always some players are unavailable due to injury.

"We missed a lot of regular players against Denmark in February but it gave me the chance to continue to expose a new group of players to international football."

"Matches like the upcoming international against China will give me another



Newcastle Jets' Nick Carle was rewarded for a great season in the A-League with a call-up to the Soccerroos squad for the friendly clash against China

opportunity to test these players and to see where we currently stand against a fellow Asian Cup finalist."

The squad consists of 17-European based players with Johnny Warren Medal winner Nick Carle along with his Newcastle Jets team-mate Jade North and five-goal

Grand Final hero Archie Thompson making up the three Australian-based A-League players in the team.

The match will be shown live and exclusive on FOX SPORTS 2 with the coverage starting from 6.30pm AEDT.

The Soccerroos next matches will be the blockbuster

home internationals against Uruguay and Argentina in June.

SOCCEEROOS SQUAD:

Michael Beauchamp (FC Nuremberg, Germany), Mark Bresciano (Palermo, Italy), Jacob Burns (Wisla Krakow, Poland), Nick Carle (Newcastle Jets, Australia), Jason Culina (PSV Eindhoven, Holland), Vince Grella (Parma, Italy), Ryan Griffiths (Rapid Bucuresti, Romania), Brett Holman (NEC Nijmegen, Holland), Brad Jones (Middlesbrough, England), Patrick Kisnorbo (Leicester City, England), Scott McDonald (Motherwell, Scotland), Lucas Neill (West Ham, England), Jade North (Newcastle Jets, Australia), Mark Schwarzer (Middlesbrough, England), Shane Stefanutto (Lillestrom, Norway), Mile Sterjovski (Basel, Switzerland), Archie Thompson (Melbourne Victory, Australia), Michael Thwaite (Wisla Krakow, Poland), Mark Viduka (Middlesbrough, England), Luke Wilkshire (Twente, Holland)

Hiddink escapes with suspended sentence



Guus Hiddink received a six month suspended sentence plus a fine of 45,000 euros

Former Socceroos coach Guus Hiddink received a six-month suspended sentence plus a fine of 45,000 euros (\$76,000) after being found guilty of tax evasion, according to Dutch media reports.

"The fact that the court didn't doubt my good faith is the most important thing here. Now I can put a cross through this affair and look to the future," Hiddink said in a statement which was read out by his solicitor in The Hague.

Hiddink, who is now at the helm of the Russian national team, will not appeal the sentence.

Hiddink led Australia to the knock-out stages of last year's World Cup before taking up the Russian position.

Mariners look local to open pre-season campaign

The Central Coast Mariners will kick off their 2007/08 A-League campaign with a pair of trial matches against local opposition.

An exhibition match against NSW Winter Super League outfit the Central Coast Lightning is first up for the Mariners, who will play off against their state level counterparts for the inaugural Central Coast Challenge Cup (CCCC) at Pluim Park on Wednesday, 4 April at 7.30pm.

Lastly, a local selection made up of the best players from the Central Coast Premier League will unite to face the Mariners in the third annual Central Coast Football Charity Plate (CCFCP), also at Pluim Park on Saturday, 9 June at 5pm.

"We're leaving absolutely no stone unturned in making sure that our team has been prepared in the best possible fashion for the 2007/08 A-League season," said Mariners Executive Chairman Lyall Gorman.

"Our team has been ticking over in training for the past few weeks and will continue to do so until late April, before commencing a thorough and meticulously thought out pre-season pro-

gram in early May.

"An integral part of this process is quality matches and, in these matches against the Lightning and a Central Coast Select Team, we have secured ourselves two fixtures that will both assist us with our preparations for season three, and also provide the people of the Central Coast with two high quality exhibitions involving the very best footballers from our region."

With Lawrie McKinna's charges currently training three days a week ahead of a scheduled two-week break in late April, the Mariners should be able to field a near full-strength line up for their early April clash against the Lightning.

The Lightning, the Central Coast's flagship team at state level, have kicked off their 2007 NSW Winter Super League campaign comprehensively.

Currently bolstered by recently re-signed Mariners players Bradley Porter and Matthew Trott, the Lightning will use the April fixture to fine tune their NSW Winter Super League campaign, where they will be hoping to improve upon their mid-table place finish of 2006.

The third annual CCFCP



Eyes on the prize as Central Coast Mariners' striker Nik Mrdja lines up with Central Coast Lightning's Neil Woodcock for the Challenge Cup trophy

will see the Mariners line up against a local Central Coast Premier League based selection, in accordance with the inaugural edition of what has become one of the pre-eminent events of the Central Coast sports calendar.

In the two previous editions of the CCFCP, the Mariners have recorded 3-0 and 2-0 wins respectively, with both matches played in front of four-figure attendances at Pluim Park - Central Coast football's spir-

itual home.

All proceeds from June's CCFCP match up will again be donated to the Central Coast Community Chest, a non-profit organisation which provides funds for over 80 local charities.

"We're delighted to be welcoming the Mariners to Pluim Park for a pair of matches that will provide our players at the Lightning and also those in the Central Coast Premier League a chance to test their skills against A-League quality opposition," said Central Coast Football Chairman Geoff Johnson.

Central Coast Challenge Cup

Central Coast Mariners versus Central Coast Lightning

Pluim Park, Lisarow
Wednesday, 4 April
Kick off 7.30pm

Central Coast Football Charity Plate

Central Coast Mariners versus Central Coast Select
Pluim Park, Lisarow
Sunday, 9 June
Kick off 5pm

*Source -
www.ccm Mariners.com.au

Filan wants part of Australia's new football age

By Chris Beattie
(Tribalfootball.com)

John Filan admits it was with little more than a nod from manager Paul Jewell last week that he knew he would be making a return to the Wigan Athletic line-up for the first time in ten months.

With Nol Chris Kirkland breaking down earlier this month, Jewell turned to Filan for their crucial battle with relegation rivals Watford and wasn't let down by the 37 year-old Aussie in the 1-1 draw.

"Having worked for the Gaffer for the last five years we know each other well enough for there to be little need for dialogue between us," Filan told tribalfootball.com.

"I know what he expects from all members of the squad and he knows that I will be professional in all responsibilities given to me.

"The players are disappointed in the position we are in at present but genuinely believe that the performances this season have been a lot better than our current league position suggests.

"The boys are realistic enough to know that you only get what you take in this league and decent performances that get you no league points are of little value as the season heads into its final third.

"Survival of Wigan Athletic in the league is the most important thing now

and the players, management and club are working hard for that common aim."

The name-dropping from Filan illustrates how successful he has been in England since taking a chance at Cambridge United over 14 years ago.

Four years at Blackburn Rovers preceded his six years at Wigan, where he helped the Latics win a League One title, followed by promotion from the Championship in 2005.

Jewell said of Filan: "He has been an outstanding player for us in our success and I've no worries whatsoever about him."

Filan credits a short spell at Doncaster Rovers for keeping him sharp for his Latics recall: "The loan period at Doncaster was enjoyable as they are a club on the move with a great bunch of lads. The deal suited both parties as I was looking to get some match practice and the new manager wanted an experienced keeper to help in the early days of his reign.

"The results went well with three wins and a draw in four outings with them but the month was cut short when I was recalled by Wigan."

As they seek to adjust to Premiership life, Filan admits the rapid changes put in place at Wigan - on and off the pitch - since their promotion two summers ago has influenced this season's campaign.

"As anyone who has been involved in

top flight football knows there are never two seasons that are the same. After the success of last season and indeed the three seasons before, the football club needed to have a significant shake up in many areas to continue to compete at this level," said Filan.

The end of this season will mark over 14 years in England for Filan and while he



Wigan Athletic keeper John Filan is ready to call Australia home once again hopefully being part of the A-League next season

won't rule out going round again, the Australia international admits the success of the A-League after just two seasons has turned his head.

Filan, who last played in Australia in 1992 with National League club St George Budapest, can't hide his enthusiasm for what he is hearing about football Down Under: "The A-league has made a big impact over here as players realise that opportunities exist back home and it is definitely an option not only for ex-pats, but also for all players to consider.

"Who wouldn't find the opportunity to play professional football in the greatest country in the world tempting?

"As the league grows and more teams are created the standard can only rise as players from around the world begin to impact on the league - and that can only be fantastic for the game back home."

On his personal prospects, Filan admits he'd love to close his career in Australia.

"My current contract with Wigan ends with the conclusion of this season and there has been interest in what I am doing next in my career," admits Filan. "Having been in the UK for the last 15 seasons, my thoughts are turning towards home and getting back to Oz - which has always been my intention.

"Playing in the UK is an option but the success of the A-league has caught a lot of people's interest over here and I'm very interested in the possibility of finishing

my playing career back where it all started in Australia.

"When I left Oz, football was locked in a cycle of false dawns and disappointment, but it seems that now the right people are in the right jobs and at last a playing career in Australia is a reality for the home grown players. Experiencing the new football age in Oz would be the perfect conclusion to a long and enjoyable career."

Filan admits a move to Sydney FC would be perfect for him, but insists he'll go anywhere for the right club.

"I would like to join a success driven club that is professionally run back home," he adds, "so we will have to wait and see if that is possible. Being from Sydney and wanting to move back there would make Sydney FC the obvious choice, but the desire of the club, manager and players is more important to me and one thing I've learned is that anything is possible in football."

After 15 seasons of success in England, that's not the only thing Filan has surely learned. With all that experience to offer, Australian football must find a place for a player who will forever be remembered as part of Wigan Athletic's most successful era.

*Article courtesy of www.tribalfootball.com

Exclusive Interview:

Melissa Barbieri

By Alan Clark

Alan Clark met Melissa Barbieri on Friday night at Richmond's VPL home game against South Melbourne. Melissa had played in Richmond's reserves, 1-2 loss in round one, but wasn't selected for the game against South Melbourne. The reserves, competition is an u-21 league which allows no more than three players each team to be over 21. Melissa would have been a fourth in that match and so wasn't selected.

AC: Why did you decide to play with a men's VPL club rather than continue with Box Hill in the WVPL?

MB: Box Hill had won the WVPL five times in a row, and I needed more of a challenge week-in and week-out. I needed the opportunity to step up my game so I could be a better goalkeeper for Australia.

None of the WVPL games put me on edge for the ninety minutes. I'll get that here in the VPL playing against guys. They're unbelievably talented all the time.

AC: So why play in a men's competition here rather than go interstate or another country where the women's game is stronger?

MB: I don't really have those options of playing overseas. I'm a goalkeeper and there's no female equivalent of Buffon, you don't get a chance to stand out in the women's game.

I could have moved interstate but I'm married now with a house and a mortgage. My family's here and I'm very family-oriented so I didn't want to leave and not see

them. This was the best option staying in my home state and getting quality opposition every week.

AC: As a Matilda and because you're at the VIS, you're exposed to a much higher level of football science than your team-mates here at Richmond. What effect has that had?

MB: They are curious when they see all the things that I do. They're always asking me what I'm doing, and what's going on with the Matildas, match schedule. They're very supportive.

I think that's the reason they're being nice to me. They have to give me a chance because they know of my reputation. They know I'm not crap because I'm playing for my country. They might initially be a bit nervous about my being on the pitch, I felt it last week when I thought they were trying to protect me, but I just need to train with them for a few times. Then they'll build up some confidence because they'll know what I can do, and how to play with me in the team.

I've always played against men. When we're training in Canberra, the Matildas play against an old-boys team and an u-16 ACT representative team. So it's high quality and high pace. But it's a rarity for VPL players to be playing against women, the juniors coming through will have done so because they might have played state girls, teams, but most would never have played beside or against a woman.

But after we lay in a couple of tough challenges, they're like 'Hold on! Women aren't meant to do that, they're meant to fall over and bruise really easily'. But we give it to them just as good as any other player.

My mum puts it perfectly: it's not females, it's not males, it's just footballers playing the game.

AC: As a goalkeeper, you're not mixing it in the middle of the park against men who might be stronger and so be at a significant disadvantage.

MB: They've got testosterone, so they step up a level about 16. The testosterone gives them speed. It's not a skill thing. Strength isn't that much of an issue, it's the



Female footballer Melissa Barbieri has become the first female player ever to participate in a men's competition in Australia with Richmond

sheer speed and size of men players. But being in the u-21 part of the VPL, I don't really feel that the strength and size of the players is much of an issue, many aren't much bigger than me anyway. It would help if I was a little taller as a keeper, but I've wished for that for a long time, and it's not going to happen.

AC: So why did you decide to try and play at Richmond, when there are another 15 clubs, including the VIS, open to you?

MB: My coach Harry Chalkidis suggested Richmond. He might have had a few clubs in mind, but Richmond said they'd take me on. I've known the u-21s coach a long time, although I didn't think he was a great supporter of Women's football, but he seemed to embrace the idea.

I only knew I'd been registered by FFV the afternoon of the opening round. I played that evening and it was good to get that game under my belt, and it was a bonus it was against the VIS who I've trained with on many occasions.

I've not been able to train with Richmond so far as there's been so many other bits of the football organisation I have to clear things with, FFA, VIS, NTC, I've got to make sure that everyone's happy. But I think that should all be sorted in time for next week's training.

AC: It'll take some of the spectators a time to get used to the idea that a woman can play in what they thought was a men's league.

MB: My husband and my mum were in the crowd for the game against VIS. They heard some negative comments which they tried to ignore and not respond to. They

weren't really nasty comments, just a bit of chatter, and you're going to get that.

I'm sure the football forums have a few. But I don't look at them and I don't want to get better. I'm doing my job and I want to get better. I'm not doing it for publicity and I don't care what people say, I just want to get better.

AC: You're also connected to Melbourne Victory and get a chance to have a run with them at training.

MB: I used to be Victory's massage therapist. I can't do it now because of my Matildas, schedule. Ernie Merrick invited me to participate in training and I did so whenever I could. I was part of the goal-keeping training with Steve Mautone working with Eugene Galekovic and Michael Theoklitos.

AC: So how was it saving Danny Allsopp thunderbolts?

MB: Danny's not a blaster, he places it. But Archie Thompson really hammers the ball. I remember stopping one of Archie's and thinking I'd broken my arm.

The Brazilians were quite funny because they wouldn't hit the ball at me, they'd just chip it up. I got angry at them and then they started playing normally after that. It probably wasn't in their nature or football background to hit a ball at a woman.

I just want to be able to show people what women footballers are capable of. That we're not prissy little girls who don't know how to play. We're good footballers and we take the game seriously. There's no reason why more women players can't step up to this level.

Picking athletes or talent

Comment
By Roy Hay

Is it about time we started examining the processes by which we select and develop our young sports people?

One concerned coach, Peter Richardson, has been observing the way young players are selected for regional and state junior representative teams in football (soccer) over many years.

He has noted that bigger, faster and older players tend to be preferred compared with smaller, younger and more skilful ones. This tends to set up a self-reinforcing process in which the selected ones get the support, training and encouragement denied to those whose talents might warrant encouragement.

This, he argues, deprives the children concerned of opportunities and the best of us of some of the best and most entertaining players to watch.

The sports scientists would not necessarily agree.

They argue that games at elite level now are played at such high speed and intensity that if you are not lightning fast and do not have enormous endurance you will be

unable to perform your skills.

You will simply never get near the ball to play.

Yet some of the most influential players of the current and past generations didn't fit this mould.

Gianfranco Zola starred at Napoli and Parma in Italy, at Chelsea in England where he was voted the best player in the club's history by its fans.

He now coaches the Italian

most marvellous technique which enables him to score fantasy goals with back heels and curling shots and lobs. Teddy Sheringham won club and international honours for Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur, including a celebrated European Champions League win over Bayern Munich with the Red Devils. Notoriously slow, he thought quicker than those

had players whose abilities were not simply athletic. Jose Mourinho, current coach of Chelsea and former winner of the Champions League with Porto, talks about his 'miracle players' the ones who can change a game by their pure skill and technique.

He also nominated the Brazilian superstar Kaka of AC Milan as a similar talent.

Kaka exploited one opening for his club to take it through against Celtic after 180 minutes of high quality but goal-less action.

It was notable that after that game the Celtic manager, Gordon Strachan, another tiny player himself, enthused about the quality of the offering, stressed that his team had the heart and the fighting qualities to match their opponent, but needed to improve their technique.

Some readers will remember an iconic moment at the World Cup in Mexico in 1986 when Strachan tried to jump over the advertising hoardings after scoring against West Germany, only to desist when his little legs wouldn't let him!

There are encouraging signs in indoor soccer (futsal) where games on small pitches with a limited number of

players put the premium on skill development. Youngsters under the age of 12 should not be playing on full size pitches outdoors.

At the local level too, things are changing. North Geelong's coach Ian Williamson and Geelong Rangers' Danny Beranic sent out teams in the Community Shield final at the weekend

which had several highly talented teenagers in their ranks. Some are physically imposing specimens already, but others are more dependent on technique rather than physique for their opportunities.

Coaches and fans need to have patience with these youngsters when they make the mistakes, sometimes costly, which are part of learning

in all walks of life and sport.

That way we will not lose the talent on our doorstep and can look forward to some exciting games in future.

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Visit our website at:

<http://www.sesasport.com.au>



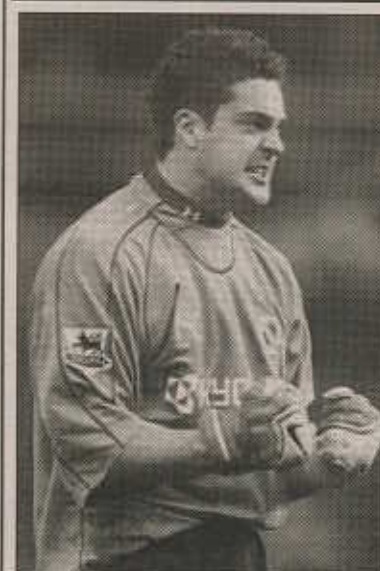
Italian star Gianfranco Zola graced Australia with his presence and played for both the Marconi Stallions and A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers

Under-21 side and recently visited Australia for a match between two Sydney clubs, A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers and Marconi, playing one half for each. He is small, nippy but not very fast, and has the

around him and is still playing for West Ham, the oldest player at 40 in the English Premiership.

These may be the exceptions which prove the rule, but all the great sides have

Federici pens new Reading contract



Reading has given Australian keeper Adam Federici a new deal at the English Premier League side

Readings goalkeeper Adam Federici has penned a new contract that will keep him at the Madejski Stadium until the end of the 2008-09 campaign.

The 22-year-old Australian has made five first-team appearances for the Royals - all in this season's FA Cup run as Steve Coppell's side reached the fifth round of the competition.

He won the Player of the Round award for his display in the fifth round draw at Manchester United. Director of football Nick Hammond told the club's official website: "Adam has worked extremely hard over the last couple of years and has thoroughly earned this opportunity."

"There's no doubt that he has a lot of potential and now he needs to take the next step and realise that potential."

Federici was part of the successful Australian Institute of Sport program before he decided to look to Europe in extending his professional football career.

Exclusive A-League Interview

Sasho Petrovski

The Central Coast Mariners' acquisition of Sasho Petrovski, one of the A-League's leading marksmen, was a telling show of intent from Mariners Football Manager Lawrie McKinna.

Only two weeks after the Mariners were eliminated from the race for the 2007/08 A-League Championship, McKinna secured the services of the Socceroos sharp shooter.

While there was little doubting that some of the Mariners' lead up play and defensive stout was equal

for the yellow and navy in 2007/08.

CC MARINERS: Firstly, welcome to the Central Coast, how does it feel to have penned a deal with the Mariners?

SASHO PETROVSKI: It's very exciting, I feel great. I'm freshening up now with this break between seasons and I just can't wait to put the Mariners jersey on, meet all the boys and come into training with them.

CC MARINERS: How did your move to the Central Coast come about?

At that stage, I hadn't sealed anything in regards to talks I was having at the time with a club in Japan, so I thought it might be a good idea to approach the Central Coast and clear the air a little and let them know my situation. In the paper it was saying that I was definitely going to Japan and the deal was done and that I was out of the Mariners limits.

I quickly got on to the phone and cleared that up with Lawrie McKinna.

After that phone call took place, everything came together very quickly and after some negotiations between Lawrie, Lyall Gorman and myself, I was signed, sealed and delivered and I was really happy with the way that it was all worked out.

CC MARINERS: What has been your impression of the club since joining?

SASHO PETROVSKI: My impressions have been of a very high regard. Everyone that I have dealt with at the club has been fantastic. The ambition of the club is huge and the people around the club are all very passionate and everyone has a lot of desire. To have such surroundings, with people that share the goals that I have set for myself - it's a great feeling.

CC MARINERS: You've been to Bluetongue Central Coast Stadium on a few occasions and have been quite successful upon your visits, how have you enjoyed your time at the home of the Mariners?

SASHO PETROVSKI: It's a lovely stadium, I really enjoy playing there. There's a lot of great stadiums in the A-League that we

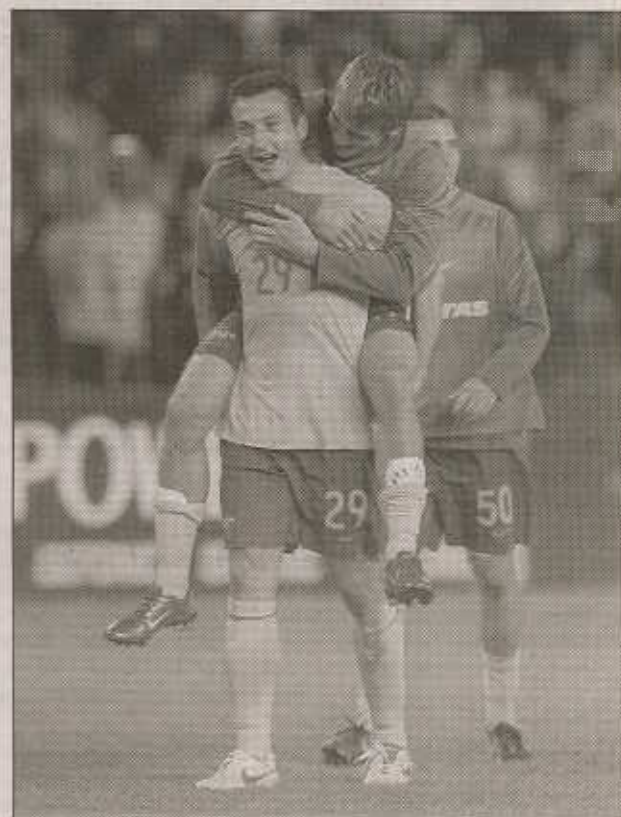
are able to play in and Bluetongue Central Coast Stadium is up there with the best. It's going to be great to run out in front of the crowd there and hopefully we'll fill the stadium up for some big finals games - that's the big picture that we're all aiming for and that's what we all want to achieve. By working hard and getting stuck in to pre-season training with my new teammates, we can produce the right results for fans to get out and enjoy.

CC MARINERS: You're the first big name signing of the off-season, are you optimistic that Lawrie and his coaching staff are piecing together a competitive unit for season three?

SASHO PETROVSKI: That's exactly what the club is looking at. Lawrie and the coaching staff have identified their targets and they're trying to lure those players in to the quality team that they have already assembled. I think the club is doing exactly what they need to do, they've identified their targets and they're looking into securing a few of them to put a Championship winning team together. It's now up to the players to live up to the expectations of our fans and deliver.

CC MARINERS: Does the possibility of playing alongside the likes of Andre Gumprecht, Adam Kwasnik and Tom Pondeljak, some of the Mariners' most recognised attacking players, excite you?

SASHO PETROVSKI: Of course! I'm looking forward to it. It's always nice to know the players that you're going to be playing with and what they're capable of and I know a lot of them through playing



Sasho Petrovski celebrates with Joel Griffiths after the Socceroos' Asian Cup qualifier win against Kuwait last year

with them or against them and I have respect for all of them for what they've achieved in Australia.

Tommy and Andre were among the best attacking players in the old National Soccer League and have been fantastic at the Mariners, they've been stepping up when they've had the opportunity. Adam Kwasnik had a fabulous year in my opinion, he scored a lot of goals and hopefully he's in for a bigger season in 2007/08.

I know that all of the players will be disappointed at not making the finals last season after such a good

inaugural year, but that's in the past now and we're looking ahead and the sooner we all get together and start gelling as a unit, the better!

CC MARINERS: Many Mariners fans would like to see yourself up front with Nik Mrdja next season, how formidable do you think a partnership between Nik and yourself can become?

SASHO PETROVSKI: Absolutely. There's a lot of different combinations that Lawrie can look at and one of those combinations is Nik and myself. We're pretty similar players, we're both target men who like to score and we know where the goal is. Nik is a big game player and I think we'll complement each other really well. If we can build a lethal partnership like Danny Allsopp and Archie Thompson have done with Melbourne, that's what we've got to work towards from day one and hopefully we'll click together when the business end of the season comes, so that the whole team and the whole club can benefit from it.

CC MARINERS: What do you believe the Mariners should be aiming towards in 2007/08?

SASHO PETROVSKI: That's a difficult question. You can't predict what is going to happen in football these days, anything can happen. With a few key injuries it becomes difficult to find quality players to replace them and provide what you've lost through injury.

There's a lot of variables, but I think that we probably missed a goal scorer last season, so the main thing is, if we can score a lot of goals and keep the defence nice and tight like it was, we can go a long way. Anything in the top four would be nice to achieve, first or second would be brilliant, and anything can happen from there.

Source - www.ccm Mariners.com.au



Sasho Petrovski shown in the A-League colours of his new club, Central Coast Mariners

to or perhaps an improvement of their efforts in season one, up front was where the Central Coast was too often found wanting in 2006/07.

Enter Petrovski - a striker with a record paralleled by only an elite few in Australia's top flight football competitions.

Several months out from version three of the A-League, ccmariners.com.au caught up with the man that Mariners fans hope will influence a change of fortunes

SASHO PETROVSKI: That's a very good question, with an interesting answer! I was sitting reading the Daily Telegraph and, at the time, there was a lot of press being generated by Sydney FC with all the dramas that were happening there last season.

I was reading through all of that and my name was mentioned in some parts and just next to the articles about Sydney FC was one saying that the Mariners were looking for a hit man!

Ljubo: It's great to be back

Melbourne Victory's latest high-profile recruit Ljubo Milicevic has expressed his delight in returning to Australia after a five-year stint in Europe where he featured in the UEFA Champions League and represented the Socceroos.



Melbourne Victory's new ace signing Ljubo Milicevic

The 26-year-old, who faced the likes of Thierry Henry and Michael Ballack during his time in Switzerland, described his homecoming as a chance to keep improving on his achievements as a player and a person.

"It's great to be back. I was in touch with Ernie Merrick and Gary Cole over the previous years and they've always wanted me to come back," Milicevic said. "With all the success of the A-League and the opportunity to play in front of family and friends again, I thought why not?"

"I don't look at this as a step back or as the end of my career, I've still got a lot of years ahead of me and hopefully with Victory and even with Australia I can keep growing as a player."

"My brother and my friends go to every game. I've been following it on the internet and it's been awesome. The fans are amazing; they seem to be very passionate, like in Europe and I can't wait to play at Telstra Dome in front of them."

Milicevic has already begun his own personal training program in preparation for the A-League 2007/08 season, where the Socceroo believes it's his adaptability that Merrick will utilise in the upcoming campaign.

"I can play in defence or midfield. Ernie



Ljubo Milicevic shown playing for FC Thun against Sparta Prague during the UEFA Champions League last year

wanted me to come back due to my versatility and ability to play in various positions. Whatever role it is, the main focus is the team and what I can do to help them."

A former student of Merrick's at the Victorian Institute of Sport, Milicevic moved to Perth Glory in 1999 before heading to FC Zurich in the Swiss Super League two years later. He then had stints at FC Basle, FC Thun and BSC Young Boys.

"I've had some amazing highs and some terrible lows. I guess that's football or life in general," Milicevic added.

"Playing in the Champions League and captaining my side in the UEFA Cup was great, and being part of the national team in different tournaments and different stages was also great."

After representing Australia at the 2005 FIFA Confederations Cup and being selected in the squad for the FIFA World Cup qualifier against Uruguay later that year, Milicevic said he would ultimately like to return to the national team.

"My first priority is doing my best for Victory, I think once I start performing for Victory everything will start taking care of itself. I love playing for Australia and I hope to play for Australia again."

Source www.mvfc.com.au



ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2007



ACL CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2007

GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Wahda (UAE)	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Al Zawra'a (IRQ)	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Al Arabi (KUW)	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Al Rayyan (QAT)	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Hilal (KSA)	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Al Kuwait (KUW)	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Esteghlal (IRN)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pakhtakor (UZB)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

GROUP C	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Karama (SYR)	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Neftchi (UZB)	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Al Sadd (QAT)	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Al Najaf (IRQ)	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

GROUP D	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Shabab (KSA)	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Sepahan (IRN)	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Al Ittihad (SYR)	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Al Ain (UAE)	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

GROUP E	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Urawa Reds (JPN)	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Sydney FC (AUS)	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Shanghai Shenhua (CHN)	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Persik Kediri (IDN)	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

GROUP F	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kawasaki Frontale (JPN)	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Bangkok University (THA)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Chunnam Dragons (KOR)	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Arema Malang (IDN)	1	0	0	1	1	3	0

GROUP G	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Seongnam Chunma (KOR)	1	1	0	0	6	2	3
Shandong Luneng (CHN)	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Adelaide United (AUS)	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Dong Tam Long An (VIE)	1	0	0	1	2	6	0

Group A - FIXTURES

Matchday 2	21/3/07	Al Zawra'a v Al Rayyan	Al Wahda v Al Arabi
Matchday 3	11/4/07	Al Zawra'a v Al Wahda	Al Arabi v Al Rayyan
Matchday 4	25/4/07	Al Rayyan v Al Arabi	Al Wahda v Al Zawra'a
Matchday 5	9/5/07	Al Wahda v Al Rayyan	Al Zawra'a v Al Arabi
Matchday 6	23/5/07	Al Rayyan v Al Zawra'a	Al Arabi v Al Wahda

Group B - FIXTURES

Matchday 2	21/3/07	Esteghlal v Al Hilal	Al Kuwait v Pakhtakor
Matchday 3	11/4/07	Pakhtakor v Al Hilal	Esteghlal v Al Kuwait
Matchday 4	25/4/07	Al Hilal v Pakhtakor	Al Kuwait v Esteghlal
Matchday 5	9/5/07	Al Kuwait v Al Hilal	Esteghlal v Pakhtakor
Matchday 6	23/5/07	Pakhtakor v Al Kuwait	Al Hilal v Esteghlal

Group C - FIXTURES

Matchday 2	21/3/07	Al Sadd v Al Najaf	Neftchi v Al Karama
Matchday 3	11/4/07	Al Karama v Al Najaf	Al Sadd v Neftchi
Matchday 4	25/4/07	Neftchi v Al Sadd	Al Najaf v Al Karama
Matchday 5	9/5/07	Al Sadd v Al Karama	Neftchi v Al Najaf
Matchday 6	23/5/07	Al Najaf v Al Sadd	Al Karama v Neftchi

Group D - FIXTURES

Matchday 2	21/3/07	Al Shabab v Sepahan	Al Ittihad v Al Ain
Matchday 3	11/4/07	Al Ain v Sepahan	Al Shabab v Al Ittihad
Matchday 4	25/4/07	Al Ittihad v Al Shabab	Sepahan v Al Ain
Matchday 5	9/5/07	Al Shabab v Al Ain	Al Ittihad v Sepahan
Matchday 6	23/5/07	Al Ain v Al Ittihad	Sepahan v Al Shabab

Group E - FIXTURES

Matchday 2 - 21/3/07	Persik Kediri v Shanghai Shenhua	Sydney FC v Urawa Reds
Matchday 3 - 11/4/07	Persik Kediri v Sydney FC	Urawa Reds v Shanghai Shenhua
Matchday 4 - 25/4/07	Sydney FC v Persik Kediri	Shanghai Shenhua v Urawa Reds
Matchday 5 - 9/5/07	Sydney FC v Shanghai Shenhua	Persik Kediri v Urawa Reds
Matchday 6 - 23/5/07	Urawa Reds v Sydney FC	Shanghai Shenhua v Persik Kediri

Group F - FIXTURES

Matchday 2 - 21/3/07	Kawasaki Frontale v Bangkok University	Chunnam Dragons v Arema Malang
Matchday 3 - 11/4/07	Chunnam Dragons v Kawasaki Frontale	Bangkok University v Arema Malang
Matchday 4 - 25/4/07	Kawasaki Frontale v Chunnam Dragons	Arema Malang v Bangkok University
Matchday 5 - 9/5/07	Chunnam Dragons v Bangkok University	Kawasaki Frontale v Arema Malang
Matchday 6 - 23/5/07	Arema Malang v Chunnam Dragons	Bangkok University v Kawasaki Frontale

Group G - FIXTURES

Matchday 2 - 21/3/07	Dong Tam Long An v Adelaide United	Shandong Luneng v Seongnam Chunma
Matchday 3 - 11/4/07	Adelaide United v Seongnam Chunma	Shandong Luneng v Dong Tam Long An
Matchday 4 - 25/4/07	Dong Tam Long An v Shandong Luneng	Seongnam Chunma v Adelaide United
Matchday 5 - 9/5/07	Dong Tam Long An v Seongnam Chunma	Shandong Luneng v Adelaide United
Matchday 6 - 23/5/07	Seongnam Chunma v Shandong Luneng	Adelaide United v Dong Tam Long An

AFC U16 Women's Championships

Australia bow out after credible draw with China

Australia has bowed out of the AFC U-16 Women's Championships, but only after giving group leader China an almighty fright in the final group match played in Kuala Lumpur.

Needing to win at least 2-0 against the Chinese, the girls showed typical Australian spirit to give as good as they got, but eventually had to settle for a 0-0 draw.

It was a much better performance from Australia, after succumbing 3-1 to Korea Republic two days earlier, who

in turn had lost to China by the same scoreline in the first group game.

In fact it was Australia's Rhali Dobson that had the two best chances of the match, both in the second half. On each occasion, she was able to create the chance for herself in the box, but was unfortunately unable to hit the target with both her attempts.

Australia had the Chinese pinned back for the last 15 minutes of the match in search for the two goals, but were unable to break down the well-organised Chinese defence.

Matildas coach Tom Sermanni, who went to Kuala Lumpur, said the team and officials have learnt some valuable lessons from this tournament and will be hopefully much better prepared next time around.

"This was the start for us at this level and eight of the girls have never traveled overseas before," said Sermanni. "The Koreans and Chinese have spent a lot of time together, preparing for this tournament, but to be honest we were too far behind them, which was evident in the way we played against China."

"The girls will have a learned a lot from this experience and will be ready once they step up to the Under 20 level."

Australian line-up: Casey Dumont (gk); Alesha Clifford, Alisha Foote, Vedrana Popovic, Melissa Redmond, Sophie Hogben, Danielle Calautti, Kyah Simon, Tameka Butt, Rhali Dobson, Stephanie Haim, Jenna Kingsley, Kirstyn Pearce, Taleah Kay Doyle, Sharpe, Li Jennifer Bisset, Marianna Tabain, Sian McLaren (gk), Emily Van-Egmond, Sam Spackman, Sam Wood



The Australian U16 Women's squad

A-League can't lose focus

Outgoing Football Federation Australia head of operations Matt Carroll says while he leaves the A-League in a healthy position, complacency could see it fall apart.

Carroll, who announced he would leave the job on April 13, was chosen by then-FFA chief executive John O'Neill to oversee the initial phases of A-League back in 2004.

With the strength of the competition seemingly growing by the day, Carroll said he was pleased with what he'd achieved, but warned the broader soccer community against losing momentum.

"I'm exceptionally proud of my time and my contribution to establish a brand new football league in Australia, it's something I'll treasure forever," Carroll told reporters in Sydney.

"I think we've set up something which Australians and in particular football fans can be very proud of, (especially) the way they've come on board and supported the clubs."

"They can have a successful league as long as they remain disciplined, but it will all come apart at the seams if they lose

the discipline."

While Carroll is likely to be remembered as a man who helped foster the A-League vision into reality, his detractors - particularly those who publicly questioned why the FFA employed someone with such a rugby-only background for the day-to-day running of the game - may have a different view.



Outgoing Football Federation Australia head of operations Matt Carroll

However, Carroll himself said he believed he had allowed the league to settle on a strong base with excellent growth prospects, making it the

"right time" to depart.

He denied the suggestion that being rejected for the chief executive position, now filled by ex-AFL administrator Ben Buckley, left him with no choice but to depart.

"I was brought in by John O'Neill to set up the A-League and some infrastructure, community football operations and regulations, and certainly those projects are now complete," he said.

"The A-League is established, and we've got a structure at the FFA to engage with the community which wasn't there before."

"It's still a bit fragile, I'm not saying it's all rosy yet, but the platform is there, and come the end of the first licensing period at the end of three years, there will be some great opportunities for this league."

Like when John O'Neill left the FFA last year, speculation is already rife about a potential return to rugby for Carroll.

While Carroll didn't rule out the prospect, he said there were currently "no vacancies" for senior positions at the ARU.

Source - AAP

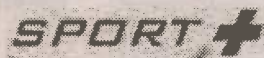
THE 2007 NSWCHS ERREA CUP & TROPHY FOOTBALL SET FOR KICK OFF

New South Wales Combined High Schools Sports Association were pleased to announce the launch of the 2007 Errea Cup & Trophy football competitions.

These "F.A. Cup" style knock out competitions are the longest running and largest open age schools football competitions in the southern hemisphere.

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Combined High Schools and Sports Plus are excited to be working together as the annual knock out series heads towards (50) years of competition and football history.



ry.

The Errea Cup & Trophy competitions have a long football heritage with many Socceroos and Matildas proudly representing their schools and meeting the challenge of negotiating nine knock out rounds in order to be crowned the ERREA Champion school.

From our most famous Socceroo: Johnny Warren at Cleveland Street to Craig Johnston at Booragul, Harry Kewell at Westfields and youngster Nathan Burns now with Adelaide in the A-League, have all been part of the program which sees over 700 teams and 12,000 players taking part in the boys & girls competitions each year

Games commenced last week across all areas of the State as well as the new Sports High division of competition, which caters for many of the elite athletes in football programs in NSW.



The 2006 ERREA CUP Football Winners for the boys was Westfields Sports High

The NSWCHS - ERREA CUP Player Awards - Boys

Year Player of the Series

1973	
1974	
1975	
1976	
1977	
1978	
1979	
1980	
1981	
1982	
1983	
1984	
1985	
1986	(Awards commenced in 1987)
1987	Milan Blagojevic - Cabramatta
1988	Mark Mlanic - Fairvale
1989	Anthony Franze - Drummoyne Boys
1990	Remyle Galloway - Dulwich Hill
1991	Matt Taylor - Smith's Hill
1992	Chris Giametti - Epping Boys
1993	Sean Babic - Westfields Sports
1994	Matthew O'Shea - Sydney Tech
1995	Peter Kryljur - Westfields Sports
1996	Gary Attard - Westfields Sports
1997	Nahuel Arrarte - Westfields Sports
1998	Shane Cansdell-Sherriff - Westfields S.
1999	Eric Analabon - Westfields Sports
2000	Alex Urizar - Bossley Park
2001	Joe Grigic - Bossley Park
2002	Chris Cop - Bossley Park
2003	Caetano Lima - Westfields Sports
2004	Ben Spruce - Endeavour Sports
2005	Jason Trifiro - Westfields Sports
2006	Ben Gough - Westfields Sports

Player of the Final

(Awards commenced in 1973)
Peter Newton - Newcastle Tech
Alan Lindsay - Wallsend
Brett Cowburn - Booragul
Mark Davis - Bankstown Boys
Mark DeMestre - Canterbury Boys
Robert Wheatley - Normanhurst Boys
Paul Bush - Port Hacking
Robert Jones - Woonona
Peter Kotamanidis - Keira
Andrew Callanan - Punchbowl
Chris Polios - Kogarah
Alan Kent - Henry Kendall
Tom Pontidas - Kogarah
Scott Gilbert - Birrong Boys
Tony Telisman - Cabramatta
Alex Aravena - Cabramatta
Peter Argitidakis - Drummoyne Boys
Mirko Jurilj - Hurstville Boys
George Souris - Merewether
Malcolm Hinchcliffe - Taree
Dalibor Strbac - Westfields Sports
Dalibor Strbac - Westfields Sports
Greg Baldock - Westfields Sports
Nahuel Arrarte - Westfields Sports
Gary Attard - Westfields Sports
Chris Root - Bossley Park
Tallan Martin - Westfields Sports
John Turco - Bossley Park
Mark Bridge - Westfields Sports
Caetano Lima - Westfields Sports
Jordan Simpson - Epping Boys
Ben Spruce - Endeavour Sports
Jason Trifiro - Westfields Sports
Jason Trifiro - Westfields Sports



The 2006 ERREA TROPHY Football Winners for the girls was The Hills Sports

NSWCHS - ERREA CUP Football Winners - Boys

1962	Maroubra Bay	1987	Cabramatta	1983	Gateshead
1963	Maroubra Bay	1988	Cabramatta	1984	Oxley
1964	Wallsend	1989	Hurstville Boys	1985	Warners Bay
1965	East Hills Boys	1990	Hurstville Boys	1986	Penrith
1966	Cleveland Street	1991	Merewether	1987	East Hills Girls
1967	Booragul	1992	Epping Boys	1988	Canterbury Girls
1968	Newcastle Tech	1993	Westfields Sports	1989	James Ruse
1969	Booragul	1994	Westfields Sports	1990	Bass
1970	Berkeley	1995	Westfields Sports	1991	Bass
1971	Meadowbank	1996	Westfields Sports	1992	South Grafton
1972	Newcastle Tech	1997	Westfields Sports	1993	James Ruse
1973	Newcastle Tech	1998	Westfields Sports	1994	James Ruse & Westport
1974	Wallsend	1999	Westfields Sports	1995	Pennant Hills
1975	Wallsend	2000	Westfields Sports	1996	Westfields Sports
1976	Bankstown Boys	2001	Westfields Sports	1997	Westfields Sports
1977	Canterbury Boys	2002	Westfields Sports	1998	Westfields Sports
1978	Normanhurst	2003	Epping Boys	1999	Westfields Sports
1979	Normanhurst	2004	Endeavour Sports	2000	Westfields Sports
1980	Woonona	2005	Westfields Sports	2001	Westfields Sports
1981	Keira	2006	Westfields Sports	2002	Westfields Sports
1982	Marsden			2003	Westfields Sports
1983	Kogarah			2004	Endeavour Sports
1984	Epping Boys			2005	The Hills Sports
1985	Kogarah			2006	The Hills Sports
1986	Birrong Boys				

NSWCHS - ERREA TROPHY Football Winners - Girls

The NSWCHS - ERREA TROPHY Player Awards - Girls

Year Player of the Series

1985	
1986	(Awards commenced in 1987)
1987	Denie Pentacost - Penrith
1988	Daveena Doyle - Canterbury Girls
1989	Lyndal Conley - East Hills Girls
1990	Megan Cotton - James Ruse
1991	Belinda West - Jannali Girls
1992	Joanne Powell - South Grafton
1993	Megan Cotton - James Ruse
1994	Elizabeth Cotton - James Ruse
1995	Erica Harrison - Pennant Hills
1996	Louise Burns - Westfields Sports
1997	Alicia Cavanagh - Westfields Sports
1998	Martene Edwards - Kadina
1999	Celeste Fihlebon - Endeavour Sports
2000	Ashley Wilson - Kadina
2001	Bernadette Madden - Kooragal
2002	Shahreen Leech - Endeavour Sports
2003	Kathryn Ward - Port Hacking
2004	Jessica Vannucci - Duval
2005	Renee Rollason - The Hills Sports
2006	Renee Rollason - The Hills Sports

Player of the Final

(Awards commenced in 1973)
Lisa Freeman - Warners Bay
Penny Zafiroopoulos - Canterbury Girls
Melinda Bullivant - East Hills Girls
Daveena Doyle - Canterbury Girls
Heloise Gibb - James Ruse
Rebecca Tansley - Bass
Michelle Watson - Bass
Joanne Powell - South Grafton
Heloise Gibb - James Ruse
Not awarded - game abandoned due to weather
Erica Harrison - Pennant Hills
Alicia Cavanagh - Westfields Sports
Ashley Hewson - Vicentia
Heather Garriock - Westfields Sports
Kristine Collins - Westfields Sports
Melissa Clancy - Westfields Sports
Julia Bazi - Westfields Sports
Kylie Ledbrook - Westfields Sports
Hayley Todd - Westfields Sports
Natalie Spirovski - Endeavour Sports
Sally Shipard - The Hills Sports
Kyah Simon - The Hills Sports



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★ NSW PREMIER LEAGUE MATCH OF THE ROUND ★

BANKSTOWN REMAIN TOP



Marconi Stallions

1



Bankstown City

1

By Greg Stock

Bankstown City remain on top of the New South Wales Premier League competition table after recording a 1-all draw with title favourites Marconi Stallions on Saturday night.

Bankstown remain unbeaten after four rounds and can thank midfielder Phil Makrys for an 82nd minute penalty that gave them a share of the points in a tough, often rugged, encounter at Marconi Stadium.

"Marconi is a tough place to come and try to take home points and I can't complain with the result," said Bankstown coach Peter Tsekenis.

In wet and slippery conditions it was the home side, minus injured midfielder Troy Halpin, that shaded the visitors for possession and chances in a first half as both sides engaged in a footballing armwrestle.

The small but vocal crowd not rewarded for their persistence until the 48th minute when Shane Webb tangled feet with Stallions' striker Matthew Gordon, with referee Ryan Shepherd awarding a penalty.

Marconi skipper Luke Casserly slotted home the spot kick.

But the home side had to do it the hard way after midfielder Vuko Tomasevic was red carded for a two footed challenge on Nahuel Arrarte in the 76th minute leaving the Stallions to battle away for the last fourteen minutes with just ten men.

With Bankstown pushing men forward to chase a result it was an errant tackle by Damon Collina on Nahuel Arrarte that saw referee Shepherd controversially point to the penalty spot.

Makrys' success with the resulting-penalty saw Bankstown stay at the top of the competition table.

"It was definitely a penalty - the players standing leg was inside the penalty box at the point of impact and anyway you look at it the referee made the right decision," said Tsekenis.

Marconi coach Brian Brown commented his disappointed at his side's start to the season.

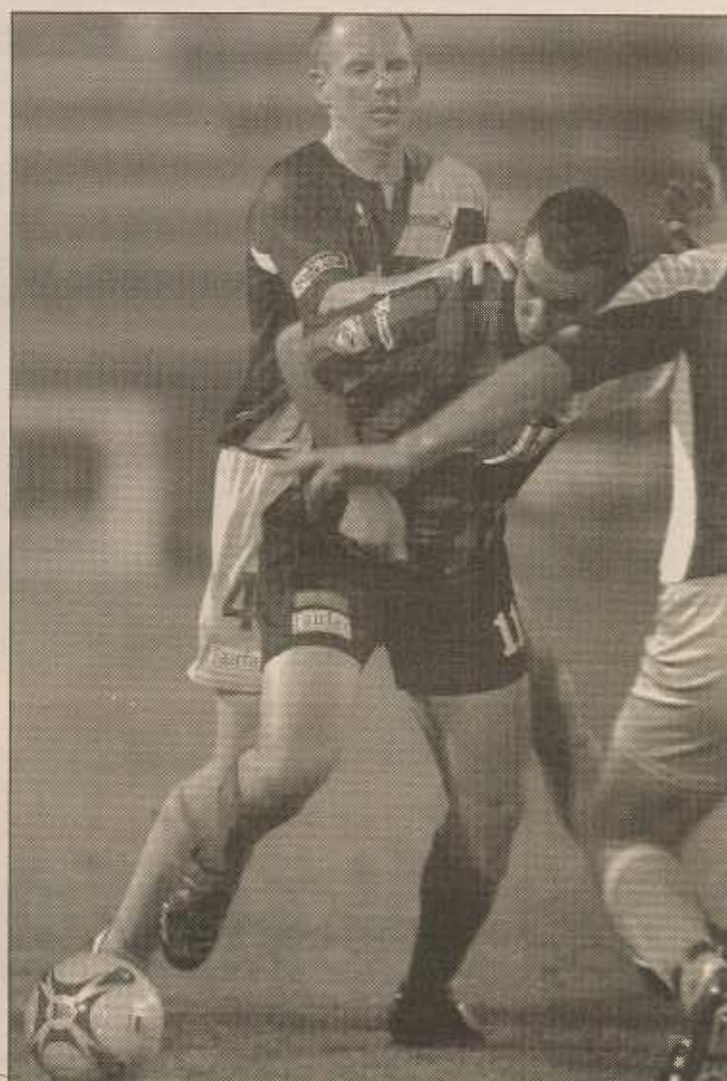
"Until the send off I definitely felt this was a game we should win," said Brown. "The result leaves us with plenty of work to do."



Bankstown City striker Robbie Mileski (right) fends off Stallions defender Paul Karbon



Marconi midfielder Damlen Foxe is on the run as Bankstown's Hidetaka Ishii watches on (right)



Bankstown City goalscorer Phillip Makrys caught in a tussle with Marconi's Damlen Foxe (left)

Marconi Stallions 1
(L Casserly 48' penalty)

Bankstown City 1
(P Makrys 82' penalty)

MARCONI Stallions: James Chronopoulos, Paul Karbon, Vuko Tomasevic, Damien Foxe, Damon Collina, Luke Casserly, Evan Berger, Scott Thomas, Kain Rastall, Matthew Gordon, Christopher Nunes.

BANKSTOWN CITY: Cem Akili, Shane Webb, Brett Studman, Richard Luksic, Peter Tsokenis, Tallan Martin (Sash Tirovski), Robert Mileski (Samuel Mort), Philip Makrys, Hidetaka Ishii, Daniel Severino (George Nohra), Nahuel Arrarte.

Red Card: Tomasevic (MS) 76'
Referee: Ryan Shepherd
Assistant Referees: Matt Cladell and Gareth Askham
Fourth Official: Murray Wilson



Goal-mouth action between Bankstown and Marconi



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DEMONS SUFFER SHARK BITE

	Blacktown City Demons	1
	Sutherland Sharks	3

By Mark Stavroulakis

Sutherland Shire Sharks bounced back to form after putting in a majestic display defeating the hot and cold Blacktown City Demons 3-1 at the Fairfax Community Stadium last Sunday afternoon.



Paul Harries was simply superb for Sutherland Sharks

Ron Corry's men put behind them the disappointment of losing its first match of the season to Manly United with a tough victory over the Demons away from home.

The Sharks had Shane Lyons (knee), Nick Stavroulakis (ankle), Ben Spruce (rib) and David Abel (hand) all sidelined while the Demons had Matthew Pressello, Brendan Renaud, Ryan Walsh and Leo Carle on the injured list prior to the match commencing.

It was the Demons that started brightly in the ninth minute when Luke Roodenburg fired his shot wide of the mark.

In the twenty-first minute, Gabriel Mendez had a speculative 25-metre long ranger saved by keeper Phillip Zabaks then seven minutes later, Demons' skipper Roodenburg again had a shot that just pipped the Sharks' post.

After a bombardment of attempts by the home side, it took the Sharks twenty-nine minutes for their first effort on goal when Paul Harries had his shot inside the Demons' box saved by Ivan Necevski.

The Demons however should have taken the lead in the thirty-sixth minute when Adrian Webster's one-on-one

attempt with Zabaks failed after the Sutherland keeper stood his ground and turned it out for a corner.

The home side were made to pay for that miss as three minutes later Sutherland struck its first goal of the match by a great header from Matthew Smith.

A pin-point cross by Harries fell invitingly on the head of Smith who hammered his effort beyond Necevski's reach.

The first half came to an end but there was to be more action in the second and the Sharks hit the Demons for a second goal in the fifty-second minute when some wonderful skill by Omar Obeid saw his cross fall straight to Harries' head who nodded home the visitor's second goal of the game.

Corry's men were on fire soon after they notched up their second and could have had a third two minutes later when Harries went one-on-one with Necevski.

The experienced striker scuffed his chance thanks to some good goalkeeping skills by the Demons' number one who saved brilliantly.

It was all the Sharks as they started to dominate the majority of the play and got their third goal of the night in the sixty-sixth minute when Obeid's low drive inside the Demons 18-yard-box slipped past Necevski.

With the Sharks cruising towards a monumental victory at the always tricky Fairfax Community Stadium, the

Demons pegged a consolation goal in the eighty-eighth minute when substitute striker Adam Biddle buried his header beyond the Sutherland net.

It was a polished performance by the Sharks who held their ground really well in the back-line as notable performances were seen by George Souris, Paul Kohler and Harries especially, who starred in Sutherland's attack.

The former Carlisle United and New Zealand Knights' striker was far too menacing for what was a weak Demons defence.

A big game and big crowd is expected at Seymour Shaw this Saturday as the third placed Sharks take on Sydney Olympic with Corry hoping that his side can keep this form they showed against Blacktown running.

For the Demons, it was a disappointing

result losing at home in front of their vocal fans as last season's Premiers have now slipped to fifth spot on the ladder and take on the in-form A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers this Sunday.



Sutherland's Omar Obeid (left) battles with Adrian Webster

Blacktown City Demons . . . 1
(A Biddle 88')

Venue: Fairfax Community Stadium, Blacktown.
Referee: Kurt Ams.
Assistant Referees: D. Morriss, A. Denzel.
Crowd: Approx 600

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: Ivan Necevski, Bobby Dragas, Tayfun Devrimol, Mirko Jurilj, Luke Roodenburg, Tolgay Ozbey, Gabriel Mendez, Roger Galayini (Adam Biddle), Milorad Simonovic, Adrian Webster (Paul Wither), Ben Ellis (Ben Gough)
Subs Not Used: Sean Rooney, Matt Nemes (gk).

Sutherland Sharks 3
(M Smith 39', P Harries 52', O Obeid 66')

SUTHERLAND SHIRE SHARKS: Phillip Zabaks, George Souris, Paul Kohler, Monte Pfrengle, David Huxley, Paul Harries, Matthew Smith, Omar Obeid (Devon Boone 84'), Ben Price, Jason Trifiro (Brendan Gan 76'), Andrew Smith (James Lawrence 46')
Subs Not Used: Alex Augusto (gk)

Yellow Cards: D Huxley (SS) 32', A Smith (SS) 40', G Mendez (BCD) 62'

MANLY TOO CLASSY FOR OLYMPIC

	Manly United	3
	Sydney Olympic	0

By Mark Stavroulakis

Phil Moss' chargers have thrown their hat in the ring as a team to look out for in this season's NSW Premier League after easily disposing of a lacklustre Sydney Olympic outfit, 3-0 at Cromer Park last Saturday evening.

Manly have now won three of their last three matches and have been seen as the team to beat after a fine football display in what were cold and wet conditions over in Sydney's Northern Beaches.

There was little action during the first half as both teams tested each other out in the opening stanza of the game but the home side did take the lead after twenty-two minutes.

Promising youngster Beau Busch scored a spectacular volley off a wicked Manly free-kick from the right side that gave Olympic keeper Michael Herbert no chance of saving.

After taking a one-nil lead, Olympic

struggled during the next period of the match and found it difficult to cope with the wet conditions at Cromer Park.

One aspect of Olympic's game that lacked was its shape and also the lack of pace which was utilised by what was a very hungry Manly outfit.

The second half produced more action than the first and it was again Manly who



Robbie Cattanaach scored the third and final goal for Manly United

made it count when they went further ahead in the fifty-ninth minute via Joey Schrippa.

The former Australian youth international was left totally unmarked after a swift Manly counter-attack that led to Schrippa scoring one of the easiest goals in his career so far.

Olympic then tried to stage a mini revival and almost nicked a goal in the sixty-ninth minute when substitute Peter Vassilis went close with his effort from outside the box that was cleverly tipped over the bar by Brad Swancott.

From the resulting corner kick, a trademark Michael Cindric header smacked the top of the crossbar much to the relief of the home fans.

With the game swinging in the visitors favour, Manly made sure of the three points in the seventy-second minute when former NSW Premier League Player of the Year Robbie Cattanaach scored from close range after he made a mockery of a disorganised Olympic defence.

Things didn't seem to go right for Manny Spanoudakis' men as they hit the woodwork for the second time in the eighty-third minute when substitute striker Josh Sama beat two players before hitting a low drive which cannoned off the base of the right post.



Manly United's Joey Schrippa scored the easiest of goals against a hapless Olympic squad

Two minutes later Schrippa almost scored his second of the game and Manly's fourth after a low shot inside the box hit the post but was later collected by

Manly United 3
(B Busch 22', J Schrippa 59', R Cattanaach 72')

Venue: Cromer Park, Cromer.
Referee: James Lewis. Crowd: Approx 800

MANLY UNITED: Brad Swancott, Richard Williams (Ashley Ryan 80'), Joey Schrippa, Michael Williams (Andy Lee 85'), Pascal Juliard, Michael Cunico, Beau Busch, Robbie Cattanaach (Andrew Mailer 80'), James Monie, Roberto Hamad, Brad Groves

Herbet.

Soon after that chance, referee James Lewis blew full-time and Manly were truly rewarded for their great display over Olympic and rightly took the three points which boosted them into the top two of the NSW Premier League ladder.

Manly will hope to continue their unbeaten run when they entertain last season's champions Sydney United this Sunday.

While for Olympic, there weren't too many positives from the match, especially in defence which was largely exposed from what was a quick Manly attack.

Olympic will be pinning their hopes on a much improved display as they take on the high flying Sutherland Shire Sharks at Seymour Shaw this Saturday.

Sydney Olympic 0

SYDNEY OLYMPIC: Michael Herbert, Tyler Simpson, Joel Thiessen (Josh Sama 64'), Michael Cindric, Ivo De Jesus, Jack Sobczyk, Raphael Bove (Peter Vassilis 64'), Lisandro Berbis (Marino Musumeci 46'), Kosta Lagoudakis, Shannon Cole, Ante Deur

Yellow Cards: T Simpson (SO), J Sobczyk (SO), S Cole (SO)

UNITED TIP OUT DISAPPOINTING WOLVES

	Wollongong Wolves	0
	Sydney United	2

By Greg Stock

Wollongong Wolves' coach John Turner and Sydney United boss Peter Papoythis may not agree on much, but on the standard of the John Crehan Park pitch they are singing the same tune.

In the wake of United's 2-0 win, both coaches have raised question marks over the surface which deprived both sides of playing to their full potential.

"The surface is bumpy and slow and it's not conducive to play good football," said Papoythis.

"I definitely agree with Peter's comments - the pitch is definitely a negative and it's a real shame for the fans," said

Turner.

On a cool wet afternoon it was a cameo from former A-League star Mile Jedinak that sent the bumper home crowd home disappointed.

After watching the Wolves miss three good chances in the first five minutes, Jedinak hit a spectacular 8th minute volley from just outside the penalty area that cannoned into the crossbar and dropped down into the net.

In the 31st minute he snared his second goal, meeting a Mason Palmieri corner at the near post and tucking away a deft header past a diving Wolves' goalkeeper Zlatko Josevski.

The move to partner Jimmy Bakis with Jedinak in the midfield paid handsome



Sydney United hero Mile Jedinak scored a double in his side's two-nil victory over the Wolves

dividends as United held tough during a rugged second half as the Wolves tried hard to narrow United's advantage.

The Wolves threw men forward late in the second half, but were reduced to playing route one football as they struggled to exert any significant pressure.

Turner admitted his side were flat having played three games in a week.

"We had a tough game against a full strength Sydney F.C. side last Wednesday night and we were nowhere near as sharp as the Olympic match," he said.

Turner's desperation to find a recognised striker had him play Nigerian Under-23 International Osagie in the youth team. Osagie scored a hat-trick and along with Michael Hawrysiuk will come into selection calculations next week.

But all honours were with United, who despite the late withdrawal of Simon Bell with a groin strain are beginning to put their best foot forward.

Wollongong Wolves 0

Venue: John Crehan Park, Wollongong.
Crowd: Approx 500. Referee: Peter Vertkovski

WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Zlatko Josevski, Daniel Cummins, Ben Blake, Tynan Diaz (Matthew Hunter), Dean Kerr, Wayne Heath (Michael West), Dustin Wells (Chimaobi Nwaogazi), Steve Hayes, Ballamadou Conde, Ivan Vojdovic, Daniel Aliffi.

Sydney United 2

(M Jedinak 8/31')

SYDNEY UNITED: Justin Pasfield, Joe Vrkic, Ante Juric, Ricky Perenich, Todd Brodie, Jimmy Bakis (Peter Zorbas), Mile Jedinak, Petar Markovic, Mason Palmieri, Steve Tresoglavic, Labinot Haliti.

TIGERS CONTINUE IMPRESSIVE FORM

	Penrith Nepean Utd	0
	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt	2

By Stuart Jones

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt continued their resurgence in the NSW Premier League as they defeated Penrith Nepean United 2-0 at CUA Stadium Penrith on Saturday night.

From the opening minutes the final result looked obvious and in the 8th minute Christian Care put over a free kick from the right and at the far post Robert Younis headed back past Fernando Greco and into the back of the net.

In the opening 20 minutes opportunities came to Younis, Christian Care, and John Kelso all to no avail.

In the 24th minute Penrith Nepean tried to strike back.

Luciano Berbis fired from just inside the area at an angle and his low dipping shot was on target until Matt Nash pulled off a magnificent one handed save that pushed the ball around the far post.

The visitors started the second term as they did the first, with a goal. In the 48th minute the Penrith Nepean players watched as Anthony Hartshorn had plenty of time on the edge of the area to pick his spot and he put the ball into the back of the net easily.

It heralded in a period of A.P.I.A. dominance as Ryan O'Shea cleared one shot

off the line, Christian Care fired a ball over the bar and other opportunities fell to Franco Parisi and Christian Care.

Care was very involved in the match but in the 78th minute picked up a second yellow card to give the locals a one-man advantage, but they could not take advantage of this.

In the 85th minute Penrith Nepean showed the attacking fluency so distinctly missing in the last few weeks. The ball was played down the left flank to Wilson who ran to the byline and cut it back to Eric Anabalon.

Anabalon turned on the edge of the area and fired a bullet of a shot goal bound but it went straight towards Nash who saved it well.

After the match coach John Romeo was pleased with the effort.

"This was a must win for us after our terrific win last week. The boys put in a 100% effort and we came away with three vital points."

In the other dressing room Claudio Canosa demanded more from his players.

"We have to be better, it is just not good enough."

"We lack the urgency and intensity I expect. We have to work hard on the training pitch and improve things."

Penrith-Nepean Utd 0

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt 2
(R Younis 8', A Hartshorn 48')

Venue: CUA Stadium, Penrith.
Referee: Srebre Delovski. Crowd: Approx 500

PENRITH-NEPEAN UNITED: Fernando Greco, Angelo Petratos, Danny Wells, Ryan O'Shea, Javier Mancino (Eric Anabalon 61'), Michael Noro, Bradley Boardman (Danny Wilson 61'), Marjan Novotni, Dave Harding, Almir Dizdovic, Luciano Berbis (Jack Long 77')
Subs Not Used: Ben Wright, Chad Taylor

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS: Matt Nash, John Kelso, Michael Galluzzo, Buddy Farah, Anthony Hartshorn, Christian Care, Franco Parisi, Robert Younis, Ian King, Stephen Kayes, Jimmy Nikas.

Subs Not Used: Leigh Gunn, Daniel Clifford, Thomas Geekie, Peter Peralta, Stuart Page

Yellow Cards: A Petratos (PNU) 79', M Novotni (PNU) 61', M Galluzzo (ALT) 69', C Care (ALT) 60', S Kayes (ALT) 49'.
Red Cards: C Care (ALT) 78'

ANDREAS LEADING GOALSCORERS TALLY									
3 - Daniel Aliffi (Wollongong Wolves), Robbie Cattinach (Manly United F.C.), Shannon Cole (Sydney Olympic), Daniel Severino (Bankstown City Lions), Robert Younis (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers)									
2 - Paul Harries (Sutherland Sharks), Mile Jedinak (Sydney United), Tallan Martin (Bankstown City Lions), Robert Mileski (Bankstown City Lions), Joey Schrippa (Manly United F.C.)									

First Grade Round 4									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts	
Bankstown City	4	3	1	0	10	4	6	10	
Manly United FC	4	3	0	1	9	4	5	9	
Sutherland Shire Sharks	4	3	0	1	5	2	3	9	
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	4	2	1	1	5	5	0	7	
Blacktown City Demons	4	1	2	1	6	6	0	5	
Marconi Stallions	4	1	2	1	4	5	-1	5	
Sydney United	4	1	2	1	4	5	-1	5	
Sydney Olympic	4	1	0	3	7	9	-2	3	
Wollongong Wolves	4	1	0	3	4	8	-4	3	
Penrith Nepean United	4	0	0	4	2	8	-6	0	

PLAYER OF THE WEEK	
PAUL HARRIES (Sutherland Sharks) -	
Scored a brilliant individual goal that helped his side to a surprise 3-1 win over Blacktown City. The former Wollongong Wolves striker is in great form giving his side a real targetman on the forward line.	

PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS	
ROUND 4	
FIRST GRADE: Manly United FC 3 (B Busch 23', J Schiripa 60', R Cattinach 73') Sydney Olympic 0, Penrith Nepean United 0 A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers 2 (R Younis 8', A Hartshorn 48'), Marconi Stallions 1 (L Casserly 48', Penalty) Bankstown City 1 (P Makrys 82' Penalty), Blacktown City 1 (A Biddle 88') Sutherland Sharks 3 (M Smith 39', P Harries 52', O Obeid 66'), Wollongong Wolves 0 Sydney United 2 (M Jedinak 8/31').	Popovski 16', J Kalantzis 22/26', Penrith Nepean United 1 (C McNaughton 35') A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers 0, Marconi Stallions 2 (T Buyukcopru G Foti) Bankstown City 0, NSWIS 1 Blacktown City 1, Blacktown City 2 (C Bedzo 5', N Agpinya 85') Sutherland Sharks 1 (M Hall 11'), Wollongong Wolves 4 (O Edero x 3 R Olender x 1) Sydney United 2 (B Vidaic M Marcinko).
GRADE 20: Manly United FC 1 (M Macedo 46') Sydney Olympic 3 (G	ROUND 3: GRADE 20: NSWIS 0 Manly United 4.

Grade 20 Round 4									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts	
Blacktown City Demons	5	3	2	0	9	6	3	11	
Sutherland Shire Sharks	5	3	1	1	10	6	4	10	
Sydney Olympic	4	3	0	1	9	4	5	9	
Marconi Stallions	3	2	1	0	12	6	6	7	
Manly United FC	5	2	1	2	10	9	1	7	
Sydney United	4	2	0	2	8	7	1	6	
Penrith Nepean United	3	1	0	2	2	3	-1	3	
Bankstown City	4	1	0	3	3	6	-3	3	
Wollongong Wolves	4	1	0	3	7	11	-4	3	
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	4	1	0	3	6	12	-6	3	
NSW Inst Sport/Academy	3	0	1	2	3	9	-6	1	

Arrive alive NSW WOMENS PREMIER LEAGUE

Arrive alive Womens Premier League

First Grade / Round 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Central Coast Lightning	2	1	1	0	5	1	4	4
Macarthur Rams	2	1	1	0	5	3	2	4
Manly United FC	2	1	1	0	5	4	1	4
Marconi Stallions	2	1	1	0	3	2	1	4
North West Sydney Koalas	2	1	0	1	3	3	0	3
Illawarra Stingrays	2	0	2	0	2	2	0	2
Sutherland Sharks	2	0	0	2	2	5	-3	0
Penrith Nepean United	2	0	0	2	2	7	-5	0

Grade 21 / Round 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Penrith Nepean United	2	2	0	0	6	1	5	6
Marconi Stallions	2	2	0	0	3	0	3	6
Manly United FC	2	1	0	1	11	5	6	3
Illawarra Stingrays	2	1	0	1	6	2	4	3
North West Sydney Koalas	2	1	0	1	3	1	2	3
Sutherland Sharks	2	1	0	1	3	3	0	3
Central Coast Lightning	2	0	0	2	0	8	-8	0
Macarthur Rams	2	0	0	2	1	13	-12	0

Round 3 Fixtures

FIRST GRADE

SUNDAY 25TH MARCH

Home Team	Away Team	Venue	Time
Marconi Stallions	Penrith Nepean United	Marconi Stadium	03:00pm
Central Coast Lightning	Macarthur Rams	Plum Park No 1	03:00pm
Manly United FC	North West Sydney Koalas	Cromer Park	03:00pm
Sutherland Sharks	Illawarra Stingrays	Harrie Denning Centre	03:00pm



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2007 NSW PREMIER LEAGUE



ROUND 5

"SEE THE STARS OF TOMORROW, TODAY"

SATURDAY - 24 MARCH 2007

Sutherland Shire Sharks v Sydney Olympic
7:30pm - Seymour Shaw

Bankstown City v Penrith Nepean United
7:30pm - Jensen Park

Marconi Stallions v Wollongong Wolves
7:30pm - Marconi Stadium

SUNDAY - 25 MARCH 2007

A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers v Blacktown City Demons
3:00pm - Lambert Park
Sydney United v Manly United FC
5:00pm - Sydney United Ctr

visit: www.soccernsw.com.au

MARCONI OVERCOMES NORTH WEST THANKS TO PENALTY

By Mel Papa

The match between Marconi Stallions and North West Sydney Koalas, set to be one of the thrillers of the season did not disappoint, with Marconi just edging out the home side 2-1.

Despite the rain threatening to put a dampener on things, the match had a fiery opening with both sides looking for early dominance. The first ten minutes had both teams testing the waters and showing each other their deserved respect and it wasn't until the 15th minute that either side really threatened.

A slip up in the Stallions' defence allowed North West's Alicia Cavanagh, ex-Marconi Captain, to slip a ball through to Lisa Gilbert, who fired the ball just over.

Despite Marconi holding most of the possession and applying the attacking pressure, it was the home side who went ahead in the 21st minute.

Marconi keeper Trudy Bartlett was caught off guard and off her line by Koalas' Danni Calvi when her cross drifted goalwards and floated over Bartlett into the back of the net.

Both sides stepped up a gear after the opening goal in what was a hugely physical game filled with big tackles and end to end action.

Marconi maintained their attacking pressure but were unable to capitalise on their opportunities until the 35th minute with Jodie Bain sending a blistering shot into the back of the net from well outside the 18 yard box.

The sides went into the break even on the scoreboard and fairly even on the playing field, with the game constantly see-sawing.

It was North West who came out after the break firing, causing trouble for the Stallions

defence and keeping Bartlett busy in goals within the first few minutes. Then against the run of play, Stallions' Fabiana Perfilio had her shirt pulled in the box and the away side were awarded a penalty.

Rebecca O'Neill made no mistake from the spot, leaving Colechin flat footed in the North West goal and giving Marconi the lead.

Marconi seemed to take the upperhand, constantly looking for attacking opportunities, and while North West frequently threatened, they couldn't seem to get past the solid Stallions defence of Jodie Bain, Alison Hogg and Jodi Bruce.

The pace began to settle as the match went on but the edge of your seat action didn't as

Marconi continued to press on the North West goal, barraging the defence with wave after wave of attacking pressure.

The final stages of the game saw North West pressing to salvage a point from the game, but some desperate defending from the away side ensured that Marconi walked away with the three points and their first win of the season.

Elsewhere, Penrith Nepean United suffered their second loss with a 3-2 defeat at the hands of Manly United FC. Macarthur Rams overcame Sutherland 3-1 while neither Illawarra or Central Coast could find a winner, playing out a 1-1 draw.



Lisa Gilbert shields the ball from Marconi's Jodie Bain
(Photo by Graham Carr)

Arrive alive WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 1

FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Gladesville Ravens	1	1	0	0	6	0	6	3
Southern Branch	1	1	0	0	4	1	3	3
Northern Tigers	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
Western NSW Panthers FC	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	1
Sydney University	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	1
Blacktown Spartans	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
UNSW	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Bankstown Wildcats	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0
St George FC	1	0	0	1	1	4	-3	0
Canterbury Association	1	0	0	1	0	6	-6	0

Arrive alive WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 1

GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Gladesville Ravens	1	1	0	0	10	0	10	3
Southern Branch	1	1	0	0	4	2	2	3
Blacktown Spartans	1	0	1	0	3	3	0	1
UNSW	1	0	1	0	3	3	0	1
Bankstown Wildcats	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Western NSW Panthers FC	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Northern Tigers	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Sydney University	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
St George FC	1	0	0	1	2	4	-2	0
Canterbury Association	1	0	0	1	0	10	-10	0

Arrive alive WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: Round 1:

FIRST GRADE: Southern Branch 4 (S Smith 30', K Meehan 44', K French 69', M Armitage 77') St George 1 (L Elliot 21'), Blacktown Spartans 1 (K Gregier) UNSW 1 (N Nitzkovic), Western NSW Panthers 2 (R Garland 8'/34') Sydney University 2 (Own goal 20', K Andrews 73'), Canterbury Association 0 Gladesville Ravens 6 (A Hardy x 1 N Ridley x 2 A Hulme x 1 C Frew x 2), Bankstown Wildcats 0 Northern Tigers 2 (R Lewis 58', K Trahair 87').

GRADE 21: Southern Branch 4 St George 2, Blacktown Spartans 3 UNSW 3, Western NSW Panthers 1 Sydney University 1, Canterbury Association 0 Gladesville Ravens 10, Bankstown Wildcats 1 Northern Tigers 1.



2007 WINTER SUPER LEAGUE WRAP

BONNYRIGG HAMMERS FRASER PARK

By Daniel de Nardi

What a difference a week makes in the Winter Super League. From an exuberant 35-goal return in last week's offensive treat to a paltry 15 scores over a damp weekend more suited to chess - and the coaches loved it!

The scores weren't as high but the games were just as tense and, while no one can deny Bonnyrigg is back on track after a 4-1 dismissal of Fraser Park, Sydney Uni showed they will also take some breaking down after claiming the outright competition lead on the back of their third straight win, a 3-1 effort over Mount Druitt.

The Northern Tigers are also looking menacing and stayed the only other unbeaten team with a 1-0 ambush of Central Coast at Pluim Park, a converted penalty to Parramatta was enough to send a despondent St George to their third straight defeat to start the season, and an angry Granville Rage clipped Stanmore Hawks 3-0.

Macarthur Rams also looked strong at home against Fairfield but it was the Lions who can claim a small victory after limping away with a valuable away point in a scoreless draw, and it was the same result for Rockdale and Liverpool with neither the Suns nor Bossy able to find what would have been a winning goal.

The results over three rounds are intriguing, but not compelling. The top-five - Uni, Northern, Central Coast, Bonnyrigg and Mount Druitt - is a true reflection of the early form teams with Macarthur, Rockdale and Parramatta lurking in the background, and it is interesting to note that from 20 games played, only four have finished in draws. The Saints are yet to score in over four hours of football to start the season.

Brutal Bonnyrigg slay Fraser Park

Bonnyrigg White Eagles sounded an ominous warning to the Winter Super League with a 4-1 demolition of Fraser Park at Bonnyrigg Sports Club on Saturday night.

Two goals in each half secured a fine result for the home side and coach Blagoje Kulevski hinted there was more than just the end-of-year WSL trophy motivating the White Eagles this year.

"Oh, there is no doubt about it that the club is working towards getting back into the Premier League, which is where it belongs," Kulevski said.

"But we also have a job to do in Super League and, no matter how well we are going now, Bonnyrigg is not a definite to win. If you don't treat the job seriously in football, you can easily be embarrassed."

"Having said that, I am very confident of

my boys. They are very disciplined and, if we take our job seriously, we will get the job done."

Despite the hammering on the scoreboard, Fraser Park coach George Fernandez backed his side to build towards better results.

"I'm happy with the players I have," he said. "They try to do the best but, no matter what you do sometimes, sometimes it is not enough."

"We have played good games in the last two weeks, but we have also played against two very good teams and, when you do not keep your concentration, you give chances to teams like Bonnyrigg and Central Coast to do everything easy."

Rangers lectured by Uni

A street-smart Sydney University maintained its perfect start to the season with a 3-1 win over a promising Mount Druitt Town Rangers outfit on Saturday night.

The Rangers were full of running at a wind-swept Hensley Athletics Field and thoroughly deserved their half-time lead when Elsid Barkhousir finished off a neat through ball by slotting it past an advancing Anthony Costa.

Mount Druitt were unlucky not to have goals in hand already when a Chris Camilleri free kick from a distant 35m out midway through the opening term needed tipping over the bar by a sharp Costa.

Just as clever was Nenos Bobo, who dispossessed Uni defender Emil Hauge on the left sideline seconds out from half-time and, seeing Costa off his line, sent an audacious chip towards the right hand corner. Uni supporters breathed a sigh of relief when it drifted centimetres wide for a goal kick.

The visitors were full of running with the winds at their back but, by not making the most of their opportunities, they were playing straight into [Uni coach] Glenn Lockhart's strategy to strike on the counter.

The plan worked a treat when Jacob Swarts leapt into a contest with Rangers keeper Peter Akers shortly after the restart and the resulting ricochet bobbed up in the back of the net to cancel out Mount Druitt's lead.

A gamble from Lockhart to throw Matthew Demetriou forward also worked well with the spritely number 10 causing plenty of headaches for the Rangers defence.

Mount Druitt weren't without their own chances and spearhead Camilleri - who trailed with Manchester United as a 16-year-old four years ago - blasted high with just the Uni keeper to beat, spoiling some great lead-up work by Barkhousir.

The Rangers striker was at it again moments later when he sent a spiraling free kick from 10 yards outside the box towards

the back of the net only to see a diving Costa tip the ball wide at the last second.

Uni made them pay dearly for the missed opportunities when Peter Gavaghan placed a great shot past Mount Druitt keeper Peter Akers to double the advantage and it was almost tripled soon after as Demetriou and Gavaghan combined on the right flank with



Action from last weekend's Winter Super League

the former heading just over the bar.

The near-miss sparked the Rangers back into action as, first, Mark Lancaster had a cracking 30m drive well held by Costa and Camilleri saw another goal-bound shot deflected wide, this time off the wall from yet another well-placed free kick.

Mount Druitt were down on their luck and a poker-faced Lockhart still had another card up his sleeve when he substituted a fresh James Alcorn for Gavaghan five minutes out from full-time.

With the ball at the feet of Demetriou on the counter, the pacy forward drew two Rangers defenders and found an unmarked Alcorn in the box. He dummied one defender and placed the ball to the left of a vulnerable Akers for a 3-1 win.

"I'm ecstatic," Uni coach, Lockhart said after leading the team in a victory chant. "Mount Druitt have a lot of firepower and we had to assess where we would negate it. We developed a strategy to isolate certain players and hit them on the counter-attack, which we did very well."

"Most teams don't rate our football, but we have resolve and I told the boys to go out there and back yourselves. I'm really proud of them. We had a great build-up to the match and executed our plan brilliantly."

Lockhart also praised his custodian Costa and said it was only a matter of time before the 20-year-old signed an A-League contract.

It was a different internal assessment

from Mount Druitt mentor Phil Pavela, who lambasted his highly-talented outfit for the number of squandered chances and for not creating more.

"I'm really not happy with the performance," a fuming Pavela said. "We did not work as a unit, something we did in our 4-0 win over Rockdale last week, and the result showed tonight."

Pavela said his challenge is get his players to focus for 90 minutes in every game of football they play.

"I have a team that can stay in the Winter Super League. They need to work on their concentration levels, which should provide the stability the club needs both on and off the park."

Rams can't buck Lions

The Macarthur Rams played all over Fairfield City at a misty Lynwood Park on Saturday night but could not find the pivotal

score in a scoreless draw paying homage more to the stoic Lions defence.

Rams coach Paul Carter was delighted with the enterprising play from his troops in tricky conditions but very disappointed they could not land the killer blow.

"We pulverized them," he said. "They had players collapsing around the field and we were all over them. I have to give credit to Fairfield. They defended well and got men behind the ball. There was one particularly tackle in the second half where a Fairfield player really put his body on the line - it was tremendous commitment."

"I can't complain about the way we played, but I can complain we didn't get the three points."

In fact, the Lions nearly completed a smash-and-grab job when Fairfield coach-come-late-substitution Aydin Cetinay pounced on a defender's slip to go one-on-one with the Rams keeper, but the Macarthur number one pulled off a fine save to keep the scores level.



WINTER SUPER LEAGUE FIRST GRADE ROUND 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Sydney University	3	3	0	0	6	1	5	9
Northern Tigers	3	2	1	0	8	6	2	7
Central Coast Lightning	3	2	0	1	7	1	6	6
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	3	2	0	1	9	6	3	6
Mt Druitt Town	3	2	0	1	8	5	3	6
Macarthur Rams	3	1	1	1	5	5	0	4
PCYC Parramatta Eagles	3	1	1	1	5	7	-2	4
Rockdale City Suns	3	1	1	1	2	4	-2	4
Granville Rage	2	1	0	1	7	5	2	3
Stanmore Hawks	3	1	0	2	5	7	-2	3
FC Bossy Liverpool	3	0	2	1	3	4	-1	2
Fairfield City Lions	3	0	2	1	2	6	-4	2
St George Saints	3	0	0	3	0	4	-4	0
Fraser Park FC	2	0	0	2	1	7	-6	0



WINTER SUPER LEAGUE GRADE 20 ROUND 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Central Coast Lightning	3	3	0	0	11	4	7	9
St George Saints	3	3	0	0	7	3	4	9
Mt Druitt Town	3	2	1	0	12	3	9	7
Fairfield City Lions	3	2	1	0	5	1	4	7
PCYC Parramatta Eagles	3	2	0	1	5	3	2	6
Granville Rage	3	1	1	1	4	4	0	4
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	3	1	1	1	4	5	-1	4
Northern Tigers	3	1	0	2	4	5	-1	3
Macarthur Rams	3	1	0	2	3	6	-3	3
Rockdale City Suns	3	1	0	2	4	9	-5	3
Sydney University	3	0	2	1	5	7	-2	2
Stanmore Hawks	3	0	1	2	1	4	-3	1
Fraser Park FC	3	0	1	2	7	12	-5	1
FC Bossy Liverpool	3	0	0	3	3	9	-6	0



WINTER SUPER LEAGUE RESULTS ROUND 3

FIRST GRADE: Bonnyrigg WE 4 (S Bozinovski 20', J Kencevski 25'/55'/68') Fraser Park 1 (J Sama 35'), Macarthur Rams 0 Fairfield City 0, Sydney University 3 (J Swarts 50', P Gavaghan 62', J Alcorn 91') Mt Druitt 1 (E Barkousir 38'), Rockdale City 0 FC Bossy Liverpool 0, Stanmore Hawks 0 Granville Rage 3 (B Murray 4', N Chahda 53'/68'), Northern Tigers 1 (T Gledhill 5') Central Coast 0, St George 0 PCYC Parramatta Eagles 1 (A Mondello 44' Penalty).

GRADE 20: Bonnyrigg WE 3 Fraser Park 2, Macarthur Rams 0 Fairfield City 1, Sydney University 3 Mt Druitt 3, Rockdale City 3 FC Bossy Liverpool 2, Stanmore Hawks 0 Granville Rage 2, Northern Tigers 0 Central Coast 1, St George 2 PCYC Parramatta Eagles 1.



WINTER SUPER LEAGUE FIXTURES ROUND 4



SATURDAY, MARCH 24

Home	Away	Venue	First Grade	Grade 20
Macarthur Rams	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Lynwood Park	7.30pm	5.30pm
Fraser Park	Northern Tigers	Fraser Park	7.30pm	5.30pm
Fairfield City Lions	Rockdale City Suns	Norford Park	6.00pm	4.00pm
Central Coast Lightning	Stanmore Hawks	Pluim Park	7.30pm	5.30pm
Granville Rage	St George Saints	Garside Park	7.30pm	5.30pm

SUNDAY, MARCH 18

Home	Away	Venue	First Grade	Grade 20
FC Bossy Liverpool	Sydney University	Ernie Smith Res	6.00pm	4.00pm
Mt Druitt Town	PCYC Parramatta Eagles	Popondetta Park	6.00pm	4.00pm

NSW PREMIER STATE & YOUTH RESULTS & TABLES

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 3

FIRST GRADE: Schofields Scorpions vs Hills United Washed Out, Blacktown Spartans 5 (G McPherson 4m M Haberman 30/55/62m J Sciberras 90m) Hurstville ZSC 0, Canterbury Bankstown 2 (S Biviano 6m J Tsironis 75m) Mt Pritchard 2 (G Orcajo 25m L Tomich 79m), Spirit FC 4 (L Papanicolaou 70/75m P Orgad 74m E Neto 77m) Dulwich Hill 1 (H James 26m), Springwood 1 (J Hunter 45m) Fairfield Bulls 1 (M Demertis 25m), Sydney Wanderers 1 (M McGovern 33m) Inter Lions 0, UNSW 3 (M Groth 40/72/85m) Ryde City 0.

GRADE 20: Schofields Scorpions vs Hills United Washed Out, Blacktown Spartans 6 Hurstville ZSC 0, Canterbury Bankstown 4 Mt Pritchard 0, Spirit FC 6 Dulwich Hill 6, Springwood 2 Fairfield Bulls 1, Sydney Wanderers 1 Inter Lions 4, UNSW 2 Ryde City 1.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 3 FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Mt Pritchard	3	2	1	0	9	4	5	7
C'bury Brown Berries	3	2	1	0	6	3	3	7
Sydney Wanderers	2	2	0	0	3	1	2	6
Spirit FC	3	2	0	1	6	5	1	6
UNSW	2	1	1	0	3	0	3	4
Hills United	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	4
Schofields Scorpions	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
Blacktown Spartans	3	1	0	2	6	6	0	3
Ryde City	3	1	0	2	5	5	0	3
Springwood	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Fairfield Bulls	2	0	1	1	2	3	-1	1
Inter Lions	3	0	0	3	2	5	-3	0
Dulwich Hill	2	0	0	2	3	8	-5	0
Hurstville ZSC	2	0	0	2	0	7	-7	0

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 3 GRADE 20

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown Spartans	3	3	0	0	14	1	13	9
Inter Lions	3	3	0	0	8	3	5	9
C'bury Brown Berries	3	2	0	1	6	1	5	6
Mt Pritchard	3	1	1	1	5	6	-1	4
Springwood	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
UNSW	2	1	0	1	4	5	-1	3
Hills United	2	1	0	1	4	7	-3	3
Spirit FC	3	0	2	1	9	10	-1	2
Schofields Scorpions	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
Fairfield Bulls	2	0	1	1	2	3	-1	1
Dulwich Hill	2	0	1	1	7	10	-3	1
Sydney Wanderers	2	0	1	1	5	8	-3	1
Ryde City	3	0	1	2	6	9	-3	1
Hurstville ZSC	2	0	0	2	0	8	-8	0

Arrive alive

NSW GIRLS PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 2

GRADE 12: Illawarra Stingrays 0 Central Coast 3, Penrith Nepean 0 Manly United 1, Macarthur Rams 1 Sutherland Sharks 0, NWS Koalas 0 Marconi Stallions 0.

GRADE 14: Illawarra Stingrays 2 Central Coast 1, Penrith Nepean 1 Manly United 1, Macarthur Rams 3 Sutherland Sharks 7, NWS Koalas 0 Marconi Stallions 2.

GRADE 16: Illawarra Stingrays 1 Central Coast 3, Penrith Nepean 1 Manly United 5, Macarthur Rams 0 Sutherland Sharks 2, NWS Koalas 3 Marconi Stallions 0.

NSW GIRLS PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 2 GRADE 12

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Macarthur Rams	2	2	0	0	2	0	2	6
Marconi Stallions	2	1	1	0	4	0	4	4
C.C. Lightning	2	1	0	1	5	3	2	3
Penrith Nepean United	2	1	0	1	3	3	0	3
Manly United FC	2	1	0	1	1	0	3	3
NWSydney Koalas	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	2
Sutherland Sharks	2	0	1	1	0	1	-1	1
Illawarra Stingrays	2	0	0	2	0	7	-7	0

NSW GIRLS PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 2 GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
NW Sydney Koalas	2	2	0	0	4	2	2	6
Penrith Nepean United	2	1	1	0	4	1	3	4
Manly United FC	2	1	0	2	1	1	4	4
Marconi Stallions	2	1	0	1	9	4	5	3
Sutherland Sharks	2	1	0	1	7	4	3	3
Illawarra Stingrays	2	1	0	1	3	8	-5	3
C.C. Lightning	2	0	0	2	1	5	-4	0
Macarthur Rams	2	0	0	2	3	8	-5	0

NSW GIRLS PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 2 GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly United FC	2	2	0	0	11	1	10	6
C.C. Lightning	2	2	0	0	6	2	4	6
NW Sydney Koalas	2	2	0	0	4	0	4	6
Sutherland Sharks	2	1	0	1	2	1	1	3

Arrive alive

NSW GIRLS SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 1

GRADE 12: Southern Branch 0 St George 12, Blacktown Spartans 1 UNSW 2, Western NSW Panthers 0 Sydney University 6, Canterbury Association 0 Gladesville Ravens 5, Bankstown Wildcats 0 Northern Tigers 5.

GRADE 14: Southern Branch 2 St George 0, Blacktown Spartans 0 UNSW 0, Western NSW Panthers 0 Sydney University 3, Canterbury Association 0 Gladesville Ravens 2, Bankstown Wildcats 0 Northern Tigers 4.

GRADE 16: Southern Branch 3 St George 0, Blacktown Spartans 7 UNSW 0, Western NSW Panthers 2 Sydney University 1, Canterbury Association 2 Gladesville Ravens 8, Bankstown Wildcats 1 Northern Tigers 1.

NSW GIRLS SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 1 GRADE 12

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
St George FC	1	1	0	0	12	0	12	3
Northern Tigers	1	1	0	0	9	0	9	3
Sydney University	1	1	0	0	6	0	6	3
Gladesville Ravens	1	1	0	0	5	0	5	3
UNSW	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
Blacktown Spartans	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
Canterbury Association	1	0	0	1	0	5	-5	0
Western NSW Panthers	1	0	0	1	0	6	-6	0
Bankstown Wildcats	1	0	0	1	0	9	-9	0
Southern Branch	1	0	0	1	0	12	-12	0

NSW GIRLS SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 1 GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Northern Tigers	1	1	0	0	4	0	4	3
Sydney University	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
Gladesville Ravens	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
Southern Branch	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
Blacktown Spartans	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
UNSW	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Canterbury Association	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0
St George FC	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0
Western NSW Panthers	1	0	0	1	0	3	-3	0
Bankstown Wildcats	1	0	0	1	0	4	-4	0

NSW GIRLS SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 1 GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown Spartans	1	1	0	0	7	0	7	3
Gladesville Ravens	1	1	0	0	8	2	6	3
Southern Branch	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
Western NSW Panthers	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
Bankstown Wildcats	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1
Northern Tigers	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Sydney University	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
St George FC	1	0	0	1	0	3	-3	0
Canterbury Association	1	0	0	1	2	8	-6	0
UNSW	1	0	0	1	0	7	-7	0

REFUND HOME LOANS

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 3

GRADE 13: Blacktown City 7 Manly United 0, A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt 3 Bankstown City 0, Wollongong Wolves 1 Marconi Stallions 3, Sydney Wanderers 0 PCYC Parramatta Eagles 0, Sydney United 2 Penrith Nepean 1, Sutherland Sharks 2 Sydney Olympic 0, Dulwich Hill 0 St George 4.

GRADE 14: Blacktown City 6 Manly United 1, A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt 1 Bankstown City 0, Wollongong Wolves 2 Marconi Stallions 3, Sydney Wanderers 2 PCYC Parramatta Eagles 4, Sydney United 1 Penrith Nepean 1, Sutherland Sharks 0 Sydney Olympic 2, Dulwich Hill 4 St George 4.

GRADE 15: Blacktown City 2 Manly United 1, A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt 0 Bankstown City 2, Wollongong Wolves 1 Marconi Stallions 2, Sydney Wanderers 1 PCYC Parramatta Eagles 2, Sydney United 6 Penrith Nepean 0, Sutherland Sharks 1 Sydney Olympic 2, Dulwich Hill 2 St George 4.

GRADE 16: Blacktown City 1 Manly United 1, A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt 0 Bankstown City 3, Wollongong Wolves 0 Marconi Stallions 1, Sydney Wanderers 2 PCYC Parramatta Eagles 2, Sydney United 1 Penrith Nepean 1, Sutherland Sharks 1 Sydney Olympic 0, Dulwich Hill 1 St George 2.

REFUND HOME LOANS PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 3 GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	3	3	0	0	12	1	11	9
Blacktown C.D.	3	3	0	0	11	2	9	9
Sutherland Shire	3	3	0	0	8	0	8	9
St George Saints	2	2	0	0	5	0	5	6
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt	3	2	0	1	6	3	3	6
Wollongong Wolves	3	1	1	1	5	5	0	4
Sydney United	3	1	1	1	3	5	-2	4
Sydney Wanderers	3	1	1	1	2	7	-5	4

REFUND HOME LOANS PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 3 GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	3	3	0	0	11	4	7	9
Sydney Olympic	3	3	0	0	8	1	7	9
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt	3	2	1	0	8	0	7	7
PCYC Parramatta	3	2	1	0	9	2	7	7
Penrith Nepean United	3	2	1	0	5	1	4	7
Wollongong Wolves	3	2	0	1	8	5	3	6
Blacktown C.D.	3	1	1	1	6	2	4	4
Bankstown City	3	1	0	2	1	3	-2	3
Sydney Wanderers	3	1	0	2	4	9	-5	3
Sydney United	3	0	2	1	2	4	-2	2
St George Saints	3	0	1	2	5	12	-7	1
Dulwich Hill	3	0	1	2	4	12	-8	1
Manly United FC	3	0	0	3	3	11	-8	0
Sutherland Shire	3	0	0	3	0	8	-8	0

REFUND HOME LOANS PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 3 GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown C.D.	3	3	0	0	8	1	7	9
St George Saints	3	2	1	0	7	2	5	7
Marconi Stallions	3	2	1	0	7	3	4	7
Sydney United	3	2	0	1	9	5	4	6
Bankstown City	3	2	0	1	5	2	3	6
PCYC Parramatta	3	1	1	1	4	4	0	4
Sydney Olympic	3	1	1	1	3	3	0	4
Sydney Wanderers	3	1	1	1	3	3	0	4
Wollongong Wolves	3	1	0	2	4	5	-1	3
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt	3	1	0	2	3	6	-3	3
Dulwich Hill	3	1	0	2	4	8	-4	3
Penrith Nepean United	3	1	0	2	4	10	-6	3
Sutherland Shire	3	0	1	2	3	7	-4	1
Manly United FC	3	0	0	3	1	6	-5	0

REFUND HOME LOANS PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 3 GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Bankstown City	3	3	0	0	8	2	6	9
Sutherland Shire	3	3	0	0	6	1	5	9
Manly United FC	3	2	1	0	5	2	3	7
Sydney Olympic	3	2	0	1	4	3	1	6
Marconi Stallions	3	2	0	1	2	2	0	6
Sydney Wanderers	3	1	1	1	4	3	1	4
St George Saints	3	1	1	1	4	4	0	4
Sydney United	3	1	1	1	2	2	0	4
Blacktown C.D.	3	1	1	1	3	4	-1	4
Penrith Nepean United	3	0	2	1	3	5	-2	2
Dulwich Hill	3	0	1	2	3	5	-2	1
PCYC Parramatta	3	0	1	2	2	5	-3	1
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt	3	0	1	2	2	6	-4	1
Wollongong Wolves	3	0	0	3	3	7	-4	0

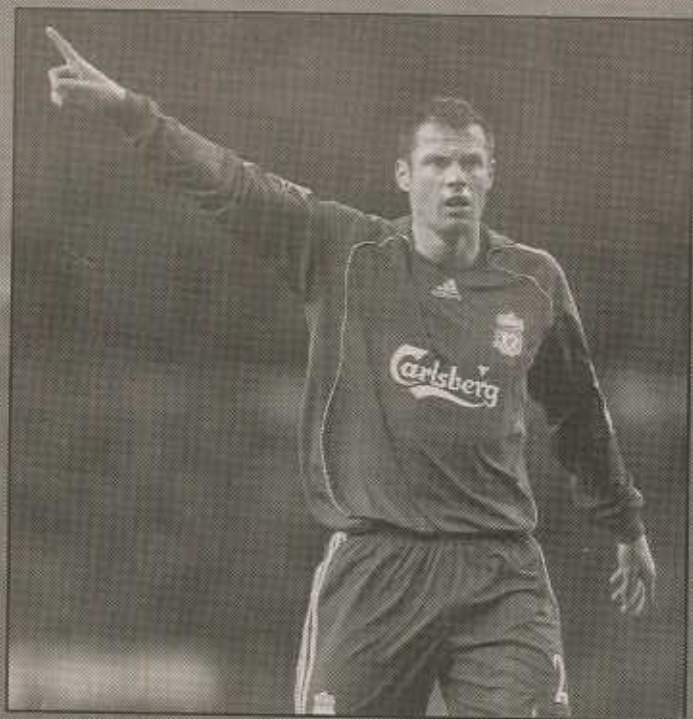
REFUND HOME LOANS PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 3 GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
St George Saints	3	3	0	0	8	4	4	9
Sutherland Shire	3	2	1	0	10	3	7	7
Sydney United	3	2	1	0	9	3	6	7
Sydney Wanderers	3	2	1	0	3	1	2	7
Wollongong Wolves	3	2	0	1	5	2	3	6
Blacktown C.D.	2	1	1	0	6	0	6	4
Marconi Stallions	3	1	1	1	3	3	0	4
Sydney Olympic	3	1	1	1	6	7	-1	4
Bankstown City	2	1	0	1	2	3	-1	3
Dulwich Hill	3	0	1	2	6	7	-1	3
Manly United FC	3	0	1	2	3	3	-1	2
Penrith Nepean United	3	0	0	3	1	8	-7	0
PCYC Parramatta	3	0	0	3	2	10	-8	0
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt	3	0	0	3	1	10	-9	0



David Villa: Europe's wanted man

Carragher: Liverpool's heart



TOTTI'S ITALIAN PLEDGE



Bayern banking on Hitzfeld



- *Larsson's Red Devils experience***
- *FIFA Interview with Ahn Jung-Hwan***
- *PSV reveal underdog status***
- *Plus the latest European Results and Tables***

Bayern bank on Hitzfeld

No coach in Europe, let alone Germany, can boast as impressive a record as Ottmar Hitzfeld.

With six Bundesliga titles, two German Cups and victory with two different clubs in the UEFA Champions League - the only manager ever to do so - the man twice voted the world's best coach in 1997 and 2001 has pedigree.

It's a good job too. For the signs are that he will need every ounce of that experience if he is to turn around the flagging fortunes of Bayern Munich.

The German giants started the season as favourites to retain their domestic crown and were well backed to do substantial damage in Europe too.

So much for that plan.

The 58-year-old ended his first six-year spell with Bayern in 2004.

Back then the tones of Edith Piaf told the Olympic Stadium 'Je ne regrette rien' as the veteran coach waved goodbye to his most successful period in management with more than a hint of a tear in his eye.

He had achieved near enough everything with Bayern - winning four championships in five years, two domestic cups, the Intercontinental Cup and, of course, the UEFA Champions League in 2001.

It was all the more surprising, then,

when he ended the 2003-2004 season without a trophy. It was that which paved the way for his departure.

Fortunately, his reputation did not suffer adversely and such was his standing within the German game that he was asked to take over the national team from Rudi Voller after a disappointing Euro 2004. He

declined, though, since the offer came just a few months after he had promised his wife and family he would not go near a football stadium for at least a year.

"I am just not in the right condition to help the national team to the 2006 World Cup," he explained at the time. "I still feel a little empty; the batteries are far from

being recharged."

That was the start of a lengthy sabbatical, and one that briefly threatened to see him turn his back on football for good. He took a well-earned break and went into the media, working as a pundit for German TV.

But the former mathematics teacher - who also coached Borussia Dortmund to the UEFA Champions League title in 1997 - could not resist the urge to return to Bavaria when the call came on a frantic day in January.

It was almost a case of history repeating itself.

Felix Magath had been the man to fill Hitzfeld's shoes when his first spell at Bayern ended, and the former Stuttgart coach quickly restored their reputation - winning the double in consecutive seasons.

Yet after the current season started with Werder Bremen stealing a march on Bayern in the title race, Magath had to go...and so the pair traded places again.

"If you slip down to fourth at Bayern, the alarm bells start to ring," said Hitzfeld, who seemed to know the internal mechanisms of Bayern even better as a pundit than he had as the club's coach.

"(Bayern general manager) Uli Hoeness called me and asked if I would be interested, if I was motivated and I immediately

said yes.

"Everything was clear after the first phone call.

"I am fit and at full strength."

The batteries were fully recharged and Hitzfeld was back at Bayern's training ground quicker than the speculation could circulate that Magath was being sacked. A six-month contract was quickly drawn up and Hitzfeld succeeded his own successor.

But while his return was swift, finding a similarly quick fix for the team has proved somewhat harder.

Just 24 hours after taking over, Hitzfeld suffered one of the most embarrassing results of his career as a 3-0 defeat to Bavarian neighbours Nurnberg brought home how difficult his task would be.

It was after that game that he all but conceded the Bundesliga, saying: "You can practically congratulate Schalke on the title."

Since then he's shown signs of some sort of revival, with three league wins sandwiched by one defeat. But realistically, his attention has turned to silverware in the UEFA Champions League, where Bayern remain the only club still flying the flag for Germany in the last 8.

Source - PA Sport



Bayern Munich's experienced mentor Ottmar Hitzfeld

Villa strikes right balance

David Villa's heady ascent to being one of world football's most sought-after strikers has been as rapid as it has been impressive.

At the age of 25 the Valencia forward dubbed 'El Guaje' (The Kid) is already a genuine world-class player and well on his way to eclipsing Spain's goalscoring legends of the past such as Alfredo Di Stefano and Emilio Butragueno.

The diminutive striker has been linked with mega-money moves to some of Europe's most prestigious clubs with Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester United and Real Madrid all reportedly prepared to break the bank to acquire his services.

But Villa, who has netted 15 goals in all competitions for Valencia this season, is refusing to get carried away with the speculation and is adamant he will stay at the Stadio Mestalla for the foreseeable future.

"The interest in me from English clubs recently is very flattering," he said.

"Chelsea are a very attractive team for every player in the world. We are talking about one of the most powerful clubs on the planet. But I am not thinking about leaving Valencia. I am focused on succeeding here."

"The fact my name keeps being linked with a move is a pleasure for me because it means my progress is being followed. But honestly I am not thinking about moving. I am very

comfortable at Valencia and do not intend to go anywhere at the moment."

"I do not know if that will change in the next two, three or four years, but right now I am not considering leaving Valencia."

Villa revealed Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez tried to sign him from

left."

If Villa has a change of heart and leaves for pastures new, his new employers would have one of the most naturally gifted strikers of this generation on their hands.

He combines an advanced football brain, an electrifying burst of speed and an unerring eye for goal - a potent

Madrid and legendary Real Madrid striker Raul are all forwards of considerable repute, but it is testament to Villa's ability that he is considered to be above such luminaries.

But such eulogies will have seemed a long way off when he started out as a raw teenager with his hometown club Sporting Gijon. He wasted little time in making a stunning impact though and netted 41 goals in his first two seasons with the club before joining Real Zaragoza in a GBP2million (\$A4.96million) deal at the age of just 21.

A further 31 goals followed in his two seasons at La Romareda before Valencia came calling with a hefty GBP8million (\$A19.84million) offer.

Eyebrows were raised at the fee for a largely unproven player but Villa silenced his critics with a sensational debut season.

A 25-goal haul in 35 Primera Liga matches and three goals in the World Cup for Spain served as definitive proof that he had arrived on the global stage.

Villa's statistics speak for themselves. But perhaps the most fitting tribute to his talent comes from one of his boyhood idols, legendary Gijon striker Quini.

The five-time Primera Liga top scorer said: "Villa is the best striker in Europe. He was born to make history and is on course to do so. He is a phenomenon."

Source - PA Sport



Valencia's gun striker David Villa is a wanted man across Europe

Real Zaragoza when he was in charge at Valencia.

"Liverpool do not just have a coach who is Spanish but I also have a lot of friends there," he said.

"When Rafa was coach at Valencia and I was at Zaragoza there was contact about me joining Valencia. But I could not arrive until the year after he

mix that led Spain's best-selling newspaper Marca to describe him as the most deadly number nine in that country.

That accolade is all the more impressive considering the rich array of striking talent on show in the Primera Liga. Barcelona's Samuel Eto'o, Fernando Torres of Atletico



Charles N'Zogbia has been linked with Arsenal

Roeder protecting young Magpies

Newcastle boss Glenn Roeder has told the club's Premiership rivals to forget about trying to snatch any of his young stars.

French midfielder Charles N'Zogbia has been linked with Arsenal, while reports at the weekend suggested Chelsea could be interested in England Under-21 defender Steven Taylor, who has previously been touted as a target for Liverpool and Tottenham.

Taylor, 21, has established himself back in the Magpies' defence after recovering from surgery on a dislocated shoulder last season, and will have a key role to play in the UEFA Cup campaign with Oguchi Onyewu ineligible in Europe.

Roeder and number two Nigel Pearson have been working closely with Taylor, and while they insist he still has a lot to learn, the manager is adamant his future lies on Tyneside.

He said: "Chelsea have not been in contact with us. No club has spoken to us about Steven Taylor - and if they did, they would be wasting their time."

"There is no chance of Taylor leaving this club while I am manager."

"We are trying to build a squad of players here, not dismantle one, and youngsters like Taylor and Charles N'Zogbia are the future."

Celestine Babayaro, Craig Moore and Peter Ramage are back in training, but not yet at the point where they could be considered for first-team duty.

Stephen Carr and Emre returned from lengthy absences for the first game with Carr starting at left-back and Emre coming on as a late substitute for Damien Duff.

United's Larss is Sweden's gain

At the risk of stating the obvious footballers do not always paint themselves in the best light. In so many ways.

Such as Anton Ferdinand, who told West Ham he was off to see his sick gran in the Isle of Wight when he was really having a knees-up with his mates in the United States.

Or Arjen Robben who keeps falling over in penalty areas for no apparent reason and wonders why no-one loves him.

Or David Navarro, the Valencia substitute whose short-arm jab broke the nose of Inter Milan's Nicolas Burdisso and sparked a UEFA Champions League free-for-all, which made the Carling Cup fisticuffs seem like a toddlers' tantrum.

Quite what goes through the minds of such footballers, if anything, is a mystery. It is certainly not the fact that they are being watched by millions of football lovers, many of them impressionable children who hang on their every word and deed.

If so they would realise that they come across as some of the slyest, most unprincipled ingrates on God's planet.

But then there is Henrik

Larsson. No false gloss with Larsson. No diving, no cheating. No fake promises.

With Larsson what it says on the tin is what you get.

And that is a striker who at 35 can still cut it at the high-

It would have been so easy for Larsson to have been seduced by United's pursuit of the treble.

So easy to have fallen in to the welcoming arms of Sir Alex Ferguson for two more

likely English Premier League triumph, which would have silenced those critics who maintain he only stayed seven years at Celtic because he was afraid the goals might have dried up if

wife Magdalena and two children who have put up with his commuting these past three months.

"I signed a contract with Helsingborgs last year and that's a contract I have to honour," Larsson says.

That's also a sentence you do not hear too often in a sports world with a 'me, me, me' culture in which loyalty has gone the way of laced-up footballs.

Where Larsson's honour leaves Manchester United's trophy chase, however, is another matter.

With Louis Saha and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer injured, Larsson gone and Wayne Rooney having lost his sharpest edge suddenly there appears to be a lack of firepower just as the season reaches its most vital point.

"United can win the Champions League without me," is Larsson's verdict.

Perhaps they can. And if they do there will be those who will insist Larsson was mad for not grabbing the chance of a glittering finale to a fabulous career.

Others might conclude that he is one of the few footballers who has already given the sport far more than he has taken.

Source - PA Sport



Swedish star striker Henrik Larsson

est level, his headed winner for Manchester United against Lille in the Champions League Rd 16 second leg a demonstration in control and precision by a master of his craft.

A striker, too, for whom honour means more than medals.

months at Old Trafford and imagined lifting the Champions League trophy for the second year running after being instrumental in Barcelona's defeat of Arsenal last season.

So easy for Larsson to have been tempted by a potential FA Cup final and

he had ventured south of the border.

But where Ferdinand lies, Robben dives and Navarro fights, Larsson keeps his word.

To home-town club Helsingborgs where he now returns for the restart of the Swedish season and to his



AS Roma skipper Francesco Totti with his son Christian has vowed that he will play for the Italian national team in September

Totti out of Scotland tie

Francesco Totti will not feature against Scotland this month after it was confirmed that he would only resume his Italy career from September.

The Roman hasn't appeared for the national side since World Cup glory after insisting that he wasn't fit enough to play for club and country.

However, there was renewed hope that Totti

would return for this month's crucial qualifier in Bari given his inspirational club form.

But the Italian Football Federation have claimed that Totti, who still has numerous screws in his ankle following his fracture last February, won't be available to boss Roberto Donadoni until next season.

"The player will be at the Coach's disposal after he has completed his recovery programme to leave the serious injury he suffered before the World Cup behind him," read an FIGC statement.

"Over the past few days, seeing the national's teams imminent activity, vice-commissioner Luigi Riva and Coach Roberto Donadoni have spoken to Totti.

"They verified his desire to return to the Azzurri once he has fully recovered," continued the note posted on the Federation's official website.

"Donadoni and Totti have agreed to continually evaluate the steps in his recovery, in a spirit of pure collaboration with the objective of a return for Italy's September games against France and Ukraine.

"Totti has issued a 'good luck' to Donadoni and his international teammates for the delicate March 28 game against Scotland."

Time for a change

You would expect telling the time to be one of the easiest jobs within a referee's remit when he officiates at a football match.

That simple function would be classed alongside remembering to take his whistle, cards, notebook and pen onto the pitch, and counting the number of players present at the start of each period.

Determining when to blow for half and full time hardly ranks with keeping order over 22 fired-up footballers when emotions spin out of control, just like they did in the Carling Cup final recently as Howard Webb's attempts to distribute justice in the wake of the unseemly brawl became impossible.

But it appears that simply choosing the right moment at which to signal the end of a match is beyond some referees who, in seemingly wanting to avoid controversy by halting proceedings while a team is attacking, instead spark anguish by going to the other extreme.

The problem, which reared its head again in Tottenham's thrilling 4-3 win at West Ham, was caused



English referee Uriah Rennie

by the introduction at the 1998 World Cup of the board displaying the amount of stoppage time to be added.

This, usually complemented by an audio announcement, means everyone in the stadium knows

exactly when the match is due to end, even though the words 'at least' tend to accompany the number of minutes revealed to give the referee some leeway.

However, there is plenty of scope for rancour to occur in situations such as the one at Upton Park, where referee Mike Dean arguably pushed West Ham closer to the relegation trapdoor by allowing play to go on long enough for Tottenham to score their winning goal.

With the score 3-3 as the 90-minute mark was reached, the digital board held up by the fourth official indicated four added minutes were to be played.

Three and a half minutes into those four minutes, West Ham were awarded a free-kick near the Spurs penalty area. It took several seconds for the kick to be taken and when it was, the ball was given away and Tottenham broke upfield. Jermain Defoe surged forwards, had a shot that was parried by goalkeeper Robert Green and the rebound was converted by Paul Stalteri.

When Stalteri knocked the ball into the net more than five minutes of stoppage time had been played.

So how on earth, from the moment the board had gone up, had Dean decided there needed to be a whole extra minute? By the time the Tottenham celebrations had died down, the match had kicked off again and the final whistle blown, the amount of stoppage time had comprised six minutes.

Referees rarely, of course, publicly explain their decisions. West Ham manager Alan Curbishley commendably refused to raise the issue in his post-match interviews, instead blaming his team for being 'naive' when they took their free-kick.

But it seems all too obvious that Dean had not wanted to risk the wrath of Tottenham boss Martin Jol by declaring full time when his side were pushing forwards with five attackers to just two defenders.

Usually there is a suitable point at which a referee can blow without causing offence to either side, for example when the ball is in the air from a goal-kick or long clearance. But there have been other occasions when they have come unstuck and the aggrieved manager has chosen not to bite his tongue.

When Chelsea won 1-0 at Bolton last November, Michael Ballack's winner from a Frank Lampard corner came in first-half stoppage time after the indicated two extra minutes had elapsed.

Bolton's protestations resulted in Abdoulaye Faye being booked by referee Steve Bennett and their manager Sam Allardyce said: "It's very rare that a referee will whistle for the break when a corner is given. He tends to wait until it's taken and blow after that."

So what can be done to avert such perceived injustices in future? One possible solution would be to take the decision away from the referee.

The amount of added time could count down on a scoreboard visible to everyone in the stadium and a hooter could sound when zero was reached - just as it does in sports such as rugby league and basketball - regardless of where the ball was.

Sounds sensible? Well don't expect it to be implemented. To anything that undermines their power, referees would not give the time of day.

Source - PA Sport





Sevilla's trailblazer

By Dario López

After FC Barcelona's defeat by Sevilla FC, Barca coach Frank Rijkaard insisted one match would not decide the season. For Sevilla, though, it meant another psychological barrier had been hurdled in the quest for a first league title since 1946. Sevilla have been breaking new ground on a regular basis since Juande Ramos was appointed coach in June 2005. Last season's UEFA Cup triumph was Sevilla's first success in Europe and their first trophy in 60 years. Suddenly Sevilla were the focus of attention, and for the first time in his career Juande Ramos was centre stage.

Recognition

The 52-year-old has spent much of his career in the shadows of Spanish football. Taking unfashionable Rayo Vallecano de Madrid to the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup in 2001 was perhaps his most notable achievement. Now, with Sevilla top of the Primera Division, the unassuming, hard-working coach is seeing life from a different perspective. "When you win a title you

don't only re-evaluate yourself, but the players do as well," he told uefa.com. "You notice you become more recognised. For example, I attended a UEFA coaches' congress in Geneva, where I started to mix with the top trainers in the game."

'Tremendous'

Juande Ramos has earned his place at the top, but after only 18 months at Sevilla even he admits the rise has been vertiginous. "The way things have gone has been tremendous, but I think you have to enjoy it without looking back because there's no past in football. You can only live in the present or the future. I'm not the sort of person that likes to look back at what has gone before."

Team effort

Ramos sees himself as just another piece in the Sevilla puzzle. He took charge with the remit of continuing the fine job his predecessor Joaquín Caparros had started and is quick to share praise with other members of the Sevilla staff. Nothing is left to chance. Ramon Rodríguez Verdejo, or 'Monchi', heads Sevilla's visionary scouting



Sevilla coach Juande Ramos

system and oversees the club's successful youth set-up; head psychologist Miguel Angel Gomez has played a crucial role in establishing belief among the players while club dietician Antonio Escribano ensures they are in peak condition come kick-off. President José María del Nido, meanwhile, was the man who sparked Sevilla's revolution.

New broom

Other clubs might have struggled following the high-profile departures of Jose Antonio Reyes, Sergio Ramos, Julio Baptista and Javier Saviola in quick succession. At Sevilla, though, no player is bigger than the team. "It was necessary to reorganise the team," Ramos says. "The players that have come in have been perfect replacements. There has been a great effort, but the adaptation was very quick. Here, everybody has their own job to do."

'Complete autonomy'

"For a club to work well everyone has to have a role and to carry that out. For exam-

ple, my relationship with president José María del Nido is excellent. I have complete autonomy and he never interferes in my work. I've tried to manage the team to play a certain way when they're on the field and the players have understood that very well. After all, they're the ones that play so they're the ones that deserve special praise."

Unsavory incident

Ramos's appointment was not welcomed with open arms by Sevilla supporters, unimpressed that their new coach counted city rivals Real Betis Balompie among his former clubs. Animosity between the two sides runs deep and spilled over during the recent cup match when the Ciudad Real-born coach was knocked unconscious by an object hurled from the stands. "When I recovered consciousness, the doctors advised me to stay in the dressing room for a while because the players were worried," Ramos said.

"That's normal because we're very united. I just hope it never happens again. This type of thing has to be eradicated from football stadiums."

Source - uefa.com

Carragher Liverpool's heart



Jamie Carragher was a towering presence against Barcelona

By Simon Hart

The new American owners of Liverpool FC could be forgiven for thinking that this soccer is a funny business. The animated celebrations that followed a 1-0 home defeat by FC Barcelona may have left Tom Hicks and George Gillett requiring a quick explanation of the away-goals rule yet even for these football neophytes, the identity of the game's star performer must have been plain to see.

'One of the best'

Defending a 2-1 first-leg advantage, Liverpool advanced in no small part thanks to an outstanding display from Jamie Carragher. The Reds centre-back set the tone for an evening where he frustrated Barcelona's attacking ambitions in the game's opening phase. When the ball first reached the home penalty area, there he was with a defiant clearance. When Deco shaped to unleash the first shot on Liverpool's goal, he was there again, this time with a crunching block. The following day's Liverpool Echo paid tribute to his efforts with the back-page headline "Carra one of best in world" while inside a "Carragher Clockwatch" listed the high points of his performance.

Fans' favourite

The Anfield crowd had no doubt who to credit for the fact Barcelona had only one shot on goal in the first half despite 59 per cent of the possession.

"We all dream of a team of Carraghers," they cried. Unlike with some modern-day football heroes, their devotion is reciprocated. Carragher's own father, Philly, started the Ring of Fire chant that became Liverpool's unofficial anthem on the road to Istanbul in 2005, and the player himself spoke more like a fan than a footballer in a memorable television interview he gave before the English League Cup final against Chelsea FC that same season. Ruled by the

interviewer's suggestion that Steven Gerrard might need to leave Liverpool to win the game's biggest prizes, Carragher's response ran along the lines of "Why are Chelsea a bigger club than Liverpool? Why not stay and make Liverpool the best?"

Progress

Two years on, Carragher's wish appears altogether less fanciful following their UEFA Champions League and FA Cup triumphs under Rafael Benítez.

Liverpool may lag behind Manchester United FC and Chelsea in the Premiership but in Europe, they will fear no one after deposing the holders.

"Besides winning finals this is probably the biggest result in Europe we've ever had," said Carragher, who stands just three games away from breaking Ian Callaghan's club record of 89 European outings. As Liverpool the team have progressed under Benítez, so has Carragher the player.

An avid student of the game off the pitch, he is a superb reader of situations on it. This one-time full-back is now Anfield's first-choice centre-half and Gerrard, for one, "wouldn't swap him for anyone".

'Fantastic leader'

Speaking to uefa.com, the Liverpool captain added: "People are saying now how

good he is but I've played with him for many, many years and he's been fantastic. He's worked really hard at his game and he's improved year after year and it's great to have him behind you when you're going into battle."

You know that if the other team gets past our midfield they've still got to beat the likes of Carra and the other defenders." The sight (and sound) of him constantly urging colleagues on against Barcelona lends weight to Gerrard's words that "he's a good character to have around the dressing room and he's a fantastic leader on the pitch". Daniel Agger, Carragher's junior partner in central defence, added: "He's always talking to everybody both in training and the matches."

Benítez backing

Carragher's shackling of Ronaldinho and Co led his manager Benítez to suggest the 29-year-old is worthy of a starting place with England. "It surprises me that Jamie is not a regular in the England team," said the Spaniard. Carragher's regular role as a defensive back-up means that despite making his debut as far back as 1999, he has won only 32 caps - with just 18 starts. England manager Steve McClaren was at Anfield the other night, however, and with doubts over John Terry's fitness, he cannot fail to have noticed that Carragher would be the perfect replacement for this month's UEFA EURO 2008™ qualifiers against Israel and Andorra.

'Great scalp'

Whatever happens with England, you sense Carragher's focus seldom strays too far from home. A boyhood fan of the Reds' Merseyside rivals Everton FC, his connection to the city of his birth is underlined by his involvement in plans to open a restaurant there, the Cafe Sport England, which will celebrate Liverpool's sporting heritage. As well as celebrating history, Carragher is determined to keep on making it, but this down-to-earth Scouser is not getting too carried away.

Source - uefa.com

Rijkaard set for Milan?

Frank Rijkaard could leave Barcelona for Milan at the end of the season, according to reports in Italy.

The Dutch tactician is allegedly looking for a house in Milan, fuelling speculation that he might replace Carlo Ancelotti on the San Siro bench.

Rijkaard is contracted to the Blaugrana until 2008, but his deal has a clause which would allow him to leave the Nou Camp one year in advance.

The defeat against Inter Milan has also increased the chances of seeing Ancelotti end his relationship with the Via Turati outfit in the summer.

"I believe my future here depends on the results I will obtain,"



Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard has been linked to managing Italian Serie A giants AC Milan next season

admitted the Rossoneri Coach.

"I would like to stay here for many years, but I know how things go in football," added the tactician, who joined Milan in 2001.

It is believed that much will depend on Milan's future in the Champions League, as well as their qualification for next season's competition.

Rijkaard had already been linked with the Via Turati club, as he is allegedly tired of the tension between himself and the dressing room.

If the news were to be confirmed, reports suggest that Ancelotti might move in the opposite direction to La Liga, with Real Madrid allegedly interested in the Coach's services.

PSV revel in underdog

By Michael Harrold

History says underestimate PSV Eindhoven at your peril. The Dutch champions are the only team outside Europe's traditional big five countries to make the UEFA Champions League quarter-final against Liverpool, but as Arsenal FC found out to their cost, that is no barrier to success for Ronald Koeman's side.

Past glory

Koeman has a special relationship with the competition. He was a key member of PSV side that won the European Champion Clubs' Cup in 1988, then repeated the feat with FC Barcelona four years later, scoring the only goal in the Wembley final against UC Sampdoria. In the conference room at the PSV Stadium his smiling face beams out from a poster-sized celebration shot commemorating the Dutch side's triumph. As he meets the press, echoes of past glory are never far away.

'Good job'

Even so, the Dutch champions are invariably considered underdogs when up against Europe's elite. Even in the Netherlands they are viewed as outsiders. Known as Boeren - the Farmers - they revel in their provincial status far from the cosmopolitanism of Amsterdam. Hard graft is most highly valued, an ethic assumed with pride at home, and successfully exported abroad.



Ronald Koeman got the better of Arsene Wenger

'Flexible'

"We worked hard together and even if we have a little bit less quality than Arsenal you can still have a good performance," midfielder Timmy Simons told uefa.com.

"Everybody says that anyway, but I think we did a good job collectively. We know how to adapt to our opponents and that's very important in football.

You have to be flexible and know when to change tactics and formation and Koeman does a great job with that. You just have to look at his career as a player to see he has everything to make it as a coach."

Wenger thwarted

Koeman showed last year just how dangerous his teams can be when least is expected of them. His SL Benfica side knocked out both Manchester United FC and Liverpool FC en route to the quarter-finals and it is not the first time Arsenal manager Arsène Wenger has been thwarted by Koeman's tactics. Not once in the four matches that his Arsenal have faced a Koeman team - two against AFC Ajax and now two against PSV - have they won. And only once have they scored in their own right, Wednesday's goal coming courtesy of PSV defender Alex's unfortunate deflection.

Stifling

Much can be made of Koeman's stifling tactics - a packed midfield starved Arsenal of the space they so thrive on - but the defining feature in the 1-1 draw in London was the discipline and focus PSV showed.

The way they worked so hard for each other was reminiscent, indeed, of the defensive displays that took Rafael Benítez's unheralded Liverpool all the way to the trophy in 2005, and José Mourinho's unfancied FC Porto to Europe's top prize the year before that.

Liverpool example

Liverpool met Milan in an unforgettable final two years ago, but it could so easily have been PSV. Not until Massimo Ambrosini scored deep into injury time in the semi-final at the PSV Stadium were the Rossoneri sure of their place in Istanbul.

It was with disbelief that PSV left the pitch that night, 3-1 winners having outplayed Milan, but eliminated on the away-goals rule.

Alex stars

That only four players survive from that side is a testament to PSV's capacity to rebuild. The spine, though, remains the same: the superb Heurlho Gomes in goal, Alex marshalling the back line and the evergreen Phillip Cocu in midfield providing support to livewire Jefferson Farfán. Alex has been the star of the campaign, and

he shone again in the second leg, making amends for an unfortunate own goal with the powerful late header that sent PSV through.

Hiddink master

"Without Alex we would be a different team," left-back Jason Culina remarked. The same might be said of Koeman. He had much to live up to when he replaced Guus Hiddink last summer.

Hiddink, the architect of PSV's 1988 triumph, who had come so close to getting them back to the final in 2005 as well as taking PSV to the summit of Dutch football. The master set the apprentice the task of keeping them there.

Koeman impresses

The 43-year-old Koeman has done that and then some. PSV are runaway leaders at home and improving all the time in Europe. They only reached the knockout stages of the UEFA Champions League for the first time in 2004/05, now they are regulars. So too is Koeman.

PSV are the third side he has led to the quarter-finals after Ajax in 2003 and Benfica last year. Perhaps this time he will go one further, and in the process get rid of the club's underdog tag once and for all.

Source - uefa.com

Rothen to restore PSG pride

By Matthew Spiro

When Jerome Rothen joined Paris Saint-Germain FC in 2004 he was widely regarded as one of the best wingers in Europe. His skilful, energetic performances on AS Monaco FC's left flank had been a constant source of inspiration during the team's run to the UEFA Champions League final, and several leading clubs expressed interest in him.

Lifelong fan

But for a lifelong PSG fan, born and raised in the French capital, the lure of the Parc des Princes proved too strong. Rothen bounded into Paris full of hope his beloved club would soon be revisiting the glory days of the 1990s.

Three years on the reality is



Jerome Rothen is determined to find success at PSG

somewhat different. PSG have continually flattered to deceive and are in danger of being relegated from Ligue 1, while Rothen's stock has also fallen. Yet despite the difficulties he has encountered, Rothen has no regrets.

"I listened to my heart when I opted for Paris and I'll never hold that against myself," the French international told uefa.com.

"I always wanted to play for PSG and the fact I'm doing so makes me happy - even if it hasn't exactly been a love story between me and the club."

Rocky relationship

Indeed, if anything Rothen's rocky relationship with PSG has more closely resembled a soap opera, and it very nearly ended in a messy divorce earlier this year. "It hasn't been easy," Rothen said. "I had a lot of injuries early on but once I started playing regularly things improved. Then there was the problem with the previous coach." Guy Lacombe's ill-fated spell as PSG boss was punctuated by run-ins with senior players, not least Rothen who spent long periods in the reserves. "My biggest wish is to be on the pitch enjoying myself. That wasn't happening under Lacombe and I came very close to leaving."

Le Guen role

Lacombe's dismissal in January represented a lifeline. His replace-

ment Paul Le Guen made it clear he regarded Rothen as an important figure, and his decision to move the 28-year-old into central midfield highlighted the coach's faith. With Rothen close to his tigerish best again, PSG's results improved, and four successive victories last month suggested the Le Guen revolution was in full swing.

"The new coach trusts me and it's going well again from a personal point of view," commented Rothen, visibly reinvigorated by the change. "I'm enjoying my new role in the middle. I'd already played there under Didier Deschamps at Monaco and with Alain Perrin at [ES] Troyes [Aube Champagne], and I'm showing again I can do a useful job."

'Respect'

The opportunity to play under Le Guen, a former PSG great, is also driving Rothen on. "Paul Le Guen is part of PSG's history and deserves respect for what he did as a player and a captain. He knows the club inside out and that's vital because PSG aren't like other clubs. We attract a lot of media attention and it's important not to get carried away. His calmness and his serenity allow us to prepare in the best possible conditions."

'Our fault'

Just as PSG looked set to move towards mid-table, however, their form slumped again at basement

club CS Sedan-Ardenne saw them slip into the bottom three. Interestingly, PSG have consistently managed to put their dismal form to one side in the UEFA Cup, and Rothen believes their run to the last 16 is proof of the team's potential.

"We still have a lot of individual quality. The key is to become a coherent team with everyone defending well together. But it's our fault we're in this position. We were

so poor in November, December and at the start of January, we've left ourselves with an almighty battle."

'Disastrous consequences'

Indeed, PSG's immediate future is likely to be far less glorious. "This is the first time I've been in a relegation battle," Rothen said. "It's

disappointing but we have to put that disappointment to one side and react because we're playing with the life of a club. Going down could have disastrous consequences so it's up to us to fight to make sure that doesn't happen." It was hardly what Rothen had bargained for three years ago, but given his determination to succeed at PSG he may yet prove just the man for the job.

Source - uefa.com

Henry vows to come back better than ever

Thierry Henry says he is devastated to be ruled out for the rest of the season, but the Arsenal captain is determined to return better than ever.

Henry will be out of action for up to three months after damaging stomach and groin muscles in the Gunners' Champions League exit to PSV Eindhoven.

The France striker has been plagued by injuries this season and this latest blow left him at a low ebb.

"I am obviously devastated. I will miss the rest of the season. It is a tough end to what has been a difficult season for me. It has been very frustrating," he told The Sun newspaper.

"But I hope to get back to full

fitness soon and will then look forward to having a great season with Arsenal next year.

"This setback will make me even more determined, yet it has certainly been one thing after another.

"Last season was a very long one for me, right up to the Champions League final and then the World Cup final with France. I only had a few weeks' break and then the Premiership started.

"First of all, there was the sciatic nerve problem, which kept me out for a while. Then, most recently of all, the foot injury. Now these injuries against PSV."



Devastated Arsenal skipper Thierry Henry



UEFA Champions League

Final ball has Athens flavour

The official ball for the 2007 UEFA Champions League final in Athens on 23 May has been unveiled by UEFA and adidas.

The Finale Athens, featuring state of the art technology, was displayed at a special ceremony in the Greek capital this afternoon. The design is based on the popular UEFA Champions League starball logo and the blue and white of the Greek national flag. Greece coach Otto Rehhagel, who also has plenty of experience in Europe's premier club competition, was a special guest at the launch.

adidas claim the 14-panel design "creates a perfectly round ball allowing great accuracy and control", adding: "The combination of the revolutionary panel shape, a new carcass construction and the thermal bonding technology provide this official match ball for the final with the best performance qualities ever." The company has been supplying balls for the UEFA Champions League since the 2001/02 season and will continue to do so until at least 2009.



The Champions League Final ball for season 2006-07.

Both finalists will receive the Finale Athens ball for use in their pre-match training in advance of the 23 May showpiece at the Olympic Stadium. The team that comes out on top in the final will also have the exclusive right to use the ball for home matches as they defend the prestigious trophy next season, as was the case with FC Barcelona this term.

Alex facing quarter-final heartache

PSV Eindhoven will have to make do without central defender Alex for both legs of their UEFA Champions League quarter-final against Liverpool FC.

The 24-year-old, who scored at both ends of PSV's 1-1 draw at Arsenal FC last



PSV's Alex, who was his side's hero in the elimination of Arsenal in the First knock-out round, will almost certainly miss the Quarter-Final ties against Liverpool.

week which ensured a 2-1 aggregate first knockout round success, was injured while attempting a pass in the first half of the goalless Eredivisie draw against SC Excelsior a week ago. An MRI scan revealed a hamstring tear that will keep the imposing Brazilian out for at least six weeks. PSV coach Ronald Koeman will almost certainly also be without striker Arouna Koné for the first leg in the Netherlands on 3 April with a knee injury.

Ancelotti awaits meeting of minds

AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti is looking forward to pitting his wits against another manager who knows all about winning the UEFA Champions League, FC Bayern München's Ottmar Hitzfeld, after the clubs were paired in the quarter-finals of this season's edition.

The Rossoneri eliminated the Bavarians in the first knockout round last year, a 4-1 second-leg victory completing a 5-2 aggregate success, only to fall in the semi-finals to eventual winners FC Barcelona. That defeat signalled the end of a proud Milan record as on each previous occasion they had knocked out Bayern they had gone on to lift a trophy. It happened in this competition in 1989/90 and 2002/03 and also in the 1967/68 UEFA Cup Winners' Cup.

Ancelotti was in the Milan team that beat SL Benfica in Vienna in the first of those European Champion Clubs' Cup finals, and 13 years later - having swapped his boots for a blazer - he coached the side to a sixth European crown by overcoming Juventus on penalties in Manchester. Hitzfeld also enjoyed a final triumph against the Turin club, as boss of BV Borussia Dortmund in 1997, and in 2001 became only the second man, after Ernst Happel, to coach two teams to Champions' Cup glory when Bayern ousted Valencia CF on penalties. That success, in Milan of all places, repre-

sents Bayern's only victory in Italy having lost on six other visits to the country.

"Hitzfeld has great experience and is a great coach who's won the trophy in the past," Ancelotti said. "He was very good tactically against Real Madrid [CF in the first knockout round] and is half the strength of the team at the moment. Bayern are a club with great tradition and strength. They had a difficult spell in the winter but have improved a lot since changing coach and I'm sure it will be a very balanced tie."



AC Milan boss, Carlo Ancelotti.

Ancelotti admitted to being pleased to avoid AS Roma and Manchester United FC - "probably the best team in Europe at the moment" - but knows his charges will meet one of those clubs in the semi-finals should they get past Bayern over two legs scheduled for 3 and 11 April. "It would be very good to play an all-Italian semi-final against Roma. I hope we both qualify," concluded the 47-year-old.

Dida extends AC Milan stay

AC Milan goalkeeper Dida has ended speculation about his future by extending his contract with the Rossoneri until 2010.

The Brazilian international's current deal was due to end this summer but he has



Nelson Dida has signed an extension to his contract with AC Milan that will keep him at the club until the end of season 2009-2010.

agreed to commit to the Italian club for a further three years. Dida, 33, enjoyed spells at EC Vitória, Cruzeiro EC, FC Lugano and SC Corinthians Paulista before moving to Italy. He won the UEFA Champions League and the Coppa Italia with Milan in 2003 and the Scudetto the following year. This season, he has played 17 games in Serie A and six during a UEFA Champions League campaign which continues against FC Bayern München in the quarter-finals next month.

Chelsea challenge vexes Valencia



Valencia coach Quique Sanchez Flores is ready for Chelsea

Valencia CF's hopes of going one better this season after two UEFA Champions League final disappointments in 2000 and 2001 were made more complicated after their first-ever pairing with Chelsea FC.

The Spanish club has reached the quarter-finals for the first time since the 2002/03 campaign while Chelsea have got to at least the last eight in three of the past four seasons. With Chelsea having won the English title for the last two years and fighting for four trophies this term, Valencia, third in Spain, know they have a tough task if they are to earn a semi-final against either PSV Eindhoven or Liverpool FC. Chelsea are at home in the first leg on 4 April, before Valencia stage the return six days later.

"The best news is that we play away first. That's important for us, even decisive," said Valencia coach Quique Sánchez Flores, who declared his team would be the underdogs. "They are a very big club, but it suits us because it will make us concentrate and demands intensity. It will be a tough tie but, from the quarter-finals, the difference between teams is minor. We'll see what form we are in in a month's time because there are four league games in between and our confidence can either rise or fall."

Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon said: "I guess you'd prefer to be at home for the second leg, but at this stage you've got to go with the draw and overall we've got to be happy."

Spalletti shows United front

Luciano Spalletti insists that he can't complain after Roma were drawn against Manchester United in the Champions League.

The Giallorossi will face the Premiership club in the last eight and the tactician believes that his men can do well if they play with the same determination shown against Lyon.

"The result of the draw doesn't really make any difference, all the clubs left are strong," said Spalletti after the draw in Athens.

"PSV Eindhoven were maybe slightly weaker, but they all have important qualities and proved their personality so far."

"Manchester have a great tradition and are used to playing at these levels, they are a strong and talented side," continued the former Udinese boss.

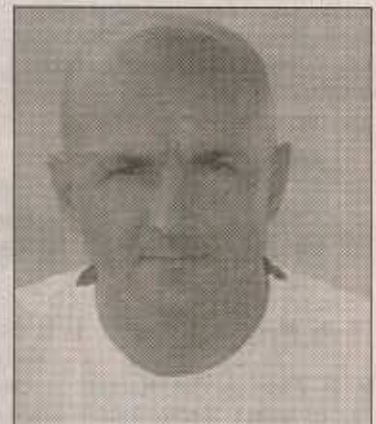
"We must behave like we did with Lyon and must be convinced of our potential."

Roma's sporting director Antonio Tempestilli is also optimistic and believes that Roma can progress to the semi-final, where they will meet Milan if the Rossoneri succeed in defeating Bayern Munich.

"Manchester are one of the strongest sides in Europe, but also Lyon were favoured against us and in the end we managed to progress," said the Giallorosso to Sky Italia.

"A semi-final with Milan? I don't want to think about it, first we have to focus on this round with Manchester."

United boss Sir Alex Ferguson is also



AS Roma coach Luciano Spalletti

remaining cautious even though his side will start the tie in pole position.

"We respect Roma's result against Lyon, they have great players like Daniele De Rossi and Amantino Mancini," he noted.

"Obviously we do not look beyond this game. We must concentrate on this match and we are looking forward to it."

"We have never played Roma before. That is the great excitement in Europe, playing teams you've never met."

Maldini survives surgery threat

Paolo Maldini's latest knee injury will not require surgery - but the Milan man may still be out of action for up to six weeks.

The veteran has been suffering with knee problems for some time.

The defender underwent a series of scans and Milan's medical staff confirmed with a note on their website that an operation is currently not needed.

"Maldini is feeling better and is in less pain," explained an official Via Turati statement.

Maldini has admitted that this latest setback does worry him in such a crucial stage of the season for his beloved club.

Whispers around Milanello are suggesting that Maldini is likely to miss the Champions League last eight ties against Bayern Munich on April 3 and 11.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FIXTURES

Quarter-Finals

Tuesday, April 3
AC Milan v Bayern Munich
PSV Eindhoven v Liverpool

Wednesday, April 4
AS Roma v Manchester United
Chelsea v Valencia

Tuesday, April 10
Manchester United v AS Roma
Valencia v Chelsea

Wednesday, April 11
Bayern Munich v AC Milan
Liverpool v PSV Eindhoven

Semi-Finals
Tuesday, April 24
AS Roma/Manchester United v AC Milan/Bayern Munich

Wednesday, April 25
Chelsea/Valencia v PSV Eindhoven/Liverpool

Tuesday, May 1
PSV Eindhoven/Liverpool v Chelsea/Valencia

Wednesday, May 2
AC Milan/Bayern Munich v AS Roma/Manchester United

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

Will be played at the Olympic Stadium in Athens, on May 23 2007.

Zokora earning Spurs success

By Michael Harrold

When Chelsea FC hosted Tottenham Hotspur FC in the recent FA Cup Clash, London wasn't the only city with divided loyalties.

In Abidjan, capital of the Ivory Coast, fans were also split as two of London's heavyweights battled in their 3-3 draw at Stamford Bridge.

Friends reunited

Following in the footsteps of Kolo Touré, Emmanuel Eboué, Salomon Kalou and Didier Drogba, Didier Zokora became the fifth Ivory Coast international to join a Premiership side* in the British capital when he signed for Tottenham from AS Saint-Etienne last summer. London

derbies have become something of a reunion for the Ivory Coast's finest, and Zokora is looking forward to catching up with old friend Drogba. "Each match we cross, the day before we talk on the phone and tease each other. 'We're going to win - I'm going to score two or three goals'," the Tottenham midfielder told uefa.com. "It's good fun. But on the pitch I don't know Drogba any more - it's Tottenham against Chelsea. He might pull my shirt at a corner to put me under some pressure, but it's nothing serious, just joking."

'Better to come'

Zokora smiles, happy to share the joke. He is enjoying life at Tottenham even though he feels Spurs fans are yet to see the best of him. Like Tottenham, Zokora's form has

fluctuated, not helped by a bout of malaria just as he was finding his feet in the Premiership.

"There's better to come," he says. "You can't measure yourself after just two or three good games, you have to play consistently well. The game is so much faster than the championship I was used to in France. Because you're not used to that tempo it can be quite hard to adapt."

'Settled'

That's where the Ivorian connection comes in. Adjusting to life in England has been easy compared to swapping Africa for Europe when he signed for KRC Genk from Abidjan's famed ASEC Mimosa academy six years ago.

"I was alone, 18 or 19 years old and didn't know anyone. This time, having

friends here really helped me. I asked Drogba and Kolo Touré what they thought and they had really high opinions of Tottenham and the city. They also helped me adapt to the English league. Now I really feel good and feel I have settled here. We're playing well and I just hope it continues."

'Proud'

Zokora knows how important it is to make the most of the chance he has been given. His brother Armando drowned in a swimming accident and he wears a tattoo of his name on his arm, a reminder of how fleeting life can be. Zokora maintains close ties to ASEC Mimosa, and is keen to make sure the next generation is afforded the same opportunities he enjoyed.

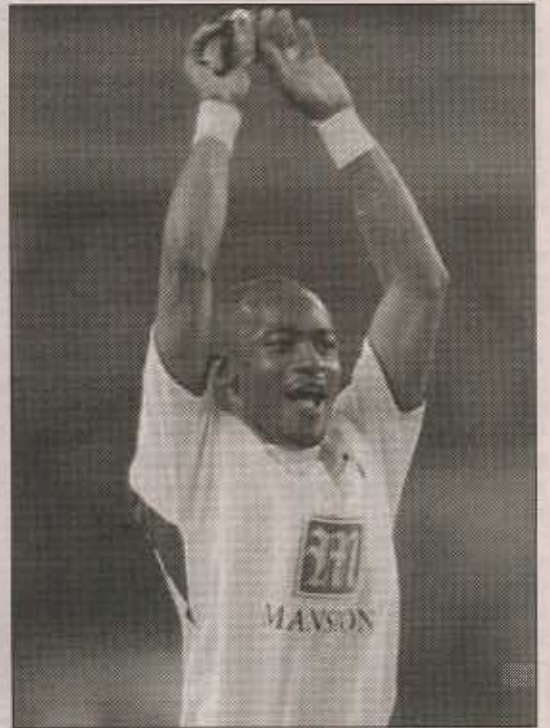
"I always go back and say

hello. They're proud of us. Everyone should have the same chance. When I can help other African players get the same chance I do it with pleasure."

Divided loyalties

At the same time, Zokora is spreading the Tottenham name. "When I go back to Abidjan I take 30 or so Tottenham shirts with me as presents. My friends are happy to wear the Zokora Tottenham shirt - it's the most beautiful present I could bring." Some of his London counterparts might disagree. As Zokora admits: "Support is shared around. Zokora fans support Tottenham, fans of Kolo and Eboué support Arsenal, Chelsea fans follow Drogba so Abidjan is divided into three parts."

Source - uefa.com



Didier Zokora is settling well at Tottenham

Ahn Jung-Hwan:

The journey continues

Ahn Jung-Hwan is a striker without peers when it comes to scoring decisive goals for Korea Republic. Not just because he has found the net 17 times in 65 international matches, but he is also the country's all-time top scorer at the FIFA World Cup™ with three goals.

But his professional career has not been so successful since he left his homeland in July 2000. After a two-year spell in Italy with Serie A side Perugia, Ahn found himself unemployed immediately after he scored the famous golden goal against Italy in a Round of 16 game at Korea/Japan 2002.

Ahn then returned to the Far East, where he spent almost three years playing for Japanese clubs Shimizu S-Pulse and Yokohama F Marinos. His European dream would go on, however, as he moved to Ligue 1 strugglers FC Metz in the summer of 2005, before switching to Bundesliga side MSV Duisburg in January.

If those four years, which were sandwiched by the last two FIFA World Cups, proved the busiest period in his career, the six months that followed turned out to be the loneliest, with Ahn forced to train by himself without a club.

Putting his seven-year journey behind him, the 31-

year-old striker has returned to where he began his career in 1998 - the K-League - and after making his debut for Suwon Samsung Bluewings, Ahn sat down with

FIFA.com to talk about his goals, clubs, and his future.



South Korean legend Ahn Jung-Hwan

FIFA.com: You have been abroad for almost seven years and now you are back in Korea. How was the opening match last week?

Ahn Jung-Hwan: I was nervous even before the kick-off as I was not 100 per cent fit. But the coach [Cha Bum-Kun] trusted me and I was in the starting line-up. It was raining cold in Suwon and the game didn't go well as I thought.

FIFA.com: You started the game as an attacking midfielder. Was it difficult

for you to adapt to the new role?

Ahn Jung-Hwan: Well, the position itself was not so difficult and modern footballers are required to cope with those kind of changes. But I had to adapt to the new surroundings - new teammates and new tactics. I was given the No10 shirt and I think this shows the expectations of everyone in and around the club. I'll do my best to fit in the squad, although it may take some time.

FIFA.com: Your trademark curly hair was gone. Is the new, simple hairstyle indicative of your determination?

Ahn Jung-Hwan: No (laughs), there's no special meaning of it. I don't really care about my hair. I just prefer something comfortable so I can forget about it and focus on the game.

FIFA.com: What is your goal for this season with Suwon?

Ahn Jung-Hwan: Winning the K-League title. So many times, I've come close to winning it - finishing runners-up in 1999 with Busan [Daewoo Royals] and lifting league cups a few times, as far as I remember. The one and only league title I've won was with Shimizu in Japan, and I want to do it again here.

FIFA.com: You have experienced five different leagues so far. Which do you think fits your style of play?

Ahn Jung-Hwan: Every league has its own style. For me, the Italian league was a good experience as I'm more of a skillful player than a powerful one. I had a fond memory of the spell in Italy, before I was forced to leave the club.

FIFA.com: Tell me more about the incident. What happened?

Ahn Jung-Hwan: I read the news that I got the sack a

few days after I scored the golden goal against Italy in the Round of 16 game in Daejeon. I was shocked at first but there was nothing I could do at that moment.

FIFA.com: Even so, isn't it your best goal yet?

Ahn Jung-Hwan: Yes, it's true that winning goals last in your memories. Besides, it was a World Cup goal and something like that is not forgotten easily.

FIFA.com: Then what was your best season so far?

Ahn Jung-Hwan: Every season is the best for me,

because I do my best in every season (laughs). My best is yet to come!

FIFA.com: You haven't been called up to the national team since last August. But are you not too young to give up the big tournaments like AFC Asian Cup 2007 or the 2010 FIFA World Cup?

Ahn Jung-Hwan: Well, for the time being, my priority is to restore my physical ability and match fitness to get a regular place in my club team.

I know there is a lot of young talent in the national squad and it's only fair to

give them a chance. As for me, I'd love to serve for my country again, but only when they need me.

FIFA.com: Where do you think you will go after your contract expires next year?

Ahn Jung-Hwan: If I do well, I might get a new contract with Suwon or offers from other clubs. It's too early to talk about that at the moment.

But I think good footballers should relish new challenges in new leagues, and I'm always ready for it.

Source - FIFA Website

Essien signs new five-year contract with Chelsea

Chelsea midfielder Michael Essien has signed a new five-year contract that ties him to the Premiership champions until 2012.

The 24-year-old has been one of the stars of Chelsea's injury-ravaged season by playing in a number of positions including right-back and centre-half as well as his more orthodox midfield role.

The Ghanaian international is in his second season at Stamford Bridge and, along with top scorer



Michael Essien has recently signed a 5-year deal with English glamour club Chelsea

Didier Drogba, is favourite to land the club's 'Player of the Year' award.

Coach Jose Mourinho has used the player for all but one game this season and Essien was delighted to commit his long-term future to the club.

Essien said: "It didn't take me long to decide to sign. I am really happy because I came here to stay a long time."

"I really work hard in training and do everything to succeed. I have the ambition to win a lot of trophies

for the club."

Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon added: "It is great to have somebody like Michael, who has already made a huge contribution, commit for another five years."

"We spent a summer getting him, it wasn't easy, and it is nice to be on the next step."

He is recognised as one of the new gems to have joined the Premiership. He is a big star back in Ghana and is a key man in Chelsea as well."

High drama hits UEFA Cup

Bayer Leverkusen has eased into the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup after comfortably defeating Lens.

Goals from Andriy Voronin 10 minutes before the break and Sergej Barbarez 10 minutes after it set the Bundesliga side up for victory.

Juan rounded off the 3-0 victory on the night, 4-2 on aggregate, with a header in the 70th minute.

Dimitar Berbatov's remarkable run of form continued as he helped ease Tottenham into the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup at the expense of SC Braga. Tottenham won 3-2 on the night for a 6-4 aggregate win.

The Portuguese side had levelled the scores on aggregate with the opener in the second leg of the last-16 clash before Berbatov notched his 18th and

19th goals of the season before the break, both strikes of the highest quality.

The Bulgaria striker, 26, has been playing with a nagging groin problem and there were suggestions boss Martin Jol wanted to rest his star signing in Spurs' hectic schedule.

But the former Bayer Leverkusen player showed no signs of fatigue or suggestions he was struggling, showing familiar class with most of his touches.

Andrade's powerful free-kick in the second half gave Braga hope of forcing extra-time, but Berbatov then set up Steed Malbranque to seal the win and maintain Tottenham's 100 percent record in the competition this season.

Werder Bremen became the second German club to advance into the quarter-finals with a 2-0 win over Celta Vigo.

Hugo Almeida and Clemens Fritz provided the goals early in the second half to complete a 3-0 aggregate win for Thomas Schaaf's side.

Celta, who sent a largely second-string side to northern Germany, rarely looked like overturning the 1-0 deficit from the first leg and, apart from having two Jose Perera goals disallowed, did little to test Bremen goalkeeper Tim Wiese.

It took 40 minutes for the game to come to life, and the first chance fell to the home side with Christian Schulz having two bites of the cherry from Almeida's cross.

His second effort, after he scuffed his first, missed the post by a distance, though.

Just three minutes into the second half, Almeida beat the offside flag and headed Kevin Schindler's cross past Esteban Suarez.

Bremen sealed their place in the quarter-finals when Fritz robbed Nene of possession before beating Matias Lequi and placing his shot past Suarez and into the far corner.

Rangers' European adventure was brought to an end as they were sent crashing out of the UEFA Cup by Osasuna at the Reyno de Navarra stadium in Pamplona.

Pierre Webo scored the only goal of the match to secure the Spanish side a 2-1 aggregate victory, ending the Scottish side's hopes of gracing this year's final, which will be held at Hampden Park in Glasgow.

Sevilla have come back from the dead to advance to the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup after defeating Shakhtar Donetsk 3-2 after extra-time to go through 5-4 on aggregate.

The holders needed a last-minute goal from goalkeeper Andres Palop to force extra-time and an Ernesto Javier Chevanton strike on 105 minutes knocked out a stubborn Shakhtar.

Sevilla had almost entirely dominated the first half, but it was Shakhtar who started brightest after the break and the home side went ahead on 49 minutes.

Brazilian striker Francelino Matuzalem appeared to have no chance of converting Ferdinandinho's left wing cross, but improvised brilliantly to fire a scorpion-style hooked effort past Palop.

Sevilla equalised in the 52nd minute, when midfielder Enzo Maresca headed powerfully past Schust after Daniel Alves had crossed superbly from the right flank.

After Ferdinandinho tried his luck from distance, the Ukrainians took the lead in the 83rd minute through an angled drive from substitute Elano.

But Sevilla were not finished and dramatically forced extra-time when the unmarked Palop rose to head home Alves' corner in the dying seconds.

Chances were few and far between in extra-time, but



Sevilla goalkeeper Andres Palop is mobbed by his fellow team-mates after scoring the equalling goal in the dying stages of the match against Shakhtar Donetsk

Sevilla got a deserved winner on 105 minutes, when Chevanton fired past Schust to break local hearts.

Espanyol romped to a 4-0 home victory over Maccabi Haifa in their second knockout round, second leg to progress to the UEFA Cup quarter-finals.

The Catalans scored three times in the space of nine minutes, early in the second half, with goals from playmaker Ivan de la Pena and strikers Raul Tamudo and Luis Garcia. Walter Pandiani added a fourth at the end.

Haifa had held Espanyol to a 0-0 draw in the first leg but could find little response to the home side's three-goal blast.

Espanyol are the third Spanish side to go into the last eight, along with holders Sevilla and Osasuna.

AZ Alkmaar turned round a 4-2 first leg deficit to sneak through to the UEFA Cup quarter-finals on the away goals rule.

Alkmaar won 2-0 on the night for a 4-4 aggregate score to complete a remarkable turn around having been down 3-0 after just 23 minutes of the away leg.

AZ started the brighter after Danny Koevermans crossed from the right and Georgian striker Shota Arveladze had the freedom of the Alkmaarder Hout stadium to tap home from inside the six yard box.

The second half was more of the same as Alkmaar, who reached the semi-finals of this competition two years ago, kept pushing forward.

Alkmaar made it two in the second half - levelling the tie on aggregate but taking the advantage on the away goals rule.

Koevermans rose highest from a right wing corner to head home at the near post and spark wild celebrations on the Alkmaar bench.

Paris Saint-Germain FC might be struggling in France's Ligue 1, but it took an 89th-minute penalty from SL Benfica captain Simão to end their brave resistance and send the Portuguese club into the UEFA Cup quarter-finals.

Certainly, the evening started going to script for Fernando Santos's men as Simão slid the ball under PSG keeper Mickaël Landreau on 12 minutes. Things got even better when, after Fabrizio Miccoli had rat-

tled the crossbar and Petit made it 2-0 after 27 minutes. The midfielder chipped the visiting custodian as he approached the opposition area, with centre-back David Rozehnal backing off, and saw his effort bounce in off the bar.

However, Benfica's overall advantage lasted only five minutes before former Portugal forward Pauleta converted Jerome Rothen's cross with a header under keeper Moretto. The rising tension in the second half resulted in a more restrained passage of play, although Benfica carried the greater threat.

Miccoli drove straight at Landreau, Simão blazed over with the clock ticking down yet then got a second chance following Youssuf Mulumbu's foul on Leo.

Mulumbu received a second yellow card, although the greater punishment was dealt to PSG by Simão's slammed penalty past Landreau. Paul Le Guen's team were left with a relegation battle to fight, while Benfica marched on to the quarter-finals.

2006/07 UEFA Cup Round of 16

Agg.	First leg	Second leg
Celta 0-3	Bremen 0-1	0-2
Lens 2-4	Leverkusen 2-1	0-3
Rangers 1-2	Osasuna 1-1	0-1
Braga 4-6	Tottenham 2-3	2-3
PSG 3-4	Benfica 2-1	1-3
M. Haifa 0-4	Espanyol 0-0	0-4
Newcastle 4-4	AZ (ag) 4-2	0-2
Sevilla 5-4	Shakhtar 2-2	3-2 (aet)

2006/07 UEFA Cup Quarter-Finals

First legs: 5 April

Second legs: 12 April

- 1 AZ Alkmaar v Werder Bremen
- 2 Bayer 04 Leverkusen v CA Osasuna
- 3 Sevilla FC v Tottenham Hotspur FC
- 4 RCD Espanyol v SL Benfica

2006/07 UEFA Cup semi-finals

First-legs: 26 April

Second-legs: 3 May

- 1 Winner quarter-final 4 v Winner quarter-final 1
- 2 Winner quarter-final 2 v Winner quarter-final 3

2006/07 UEFA Cup final

Glasgow, Scotland

Wednesday 16 May

- 1 Winner semi-final 1 v Winner semi-final 2

EURO 2008 QUALIFIERS

Group A	Group B
Belgium	France
Finland	Italy
Poland	Scotland
Portugal	Faroe Islands
Serbia and Monte.	Lithuania
Azerbaijan	Georgia
Armenia	Ukraine
Kazakhstan	

Group C
Greece
Hungary
Malta
Norway
Turkey
Moldova
Bosnia-Herzegovina

Group E
England
Israel
Croatia

Group D
Cyprus
Germany
Rep. of Ireland
Wales
San Marino
Czech Rep.

Group F
Denmark
Iceland
Northern Ireland

Group G
Albania
Bulgaria
Luxembourg
Netherlands
Romania
Belarus
Slovenia

Euro 2008 Qualifying round fixtures

Group	Home	Score	Away	Date
Grp A	Poland	TBD	Azerbaijan	24/03/07
Grp A	Portugal	TBD	Belgium	24/03/07
Grp A	Kazakhstan	TBD	Serbia	24/03/07
Grp B	Scotland	TBD	Georgia	24/03/07
Grp B	Faroe Islands	TBD	Ukraine	24/03/07
Grp B	Lithuania	TBD	France	24/03/07
Grp C	Greece	TBD	Turkey	24/03/07
Grp C	Norway	TBD	Bosnia-Herzegovina	24/03/07

Grp C	Moldova	TBD	Malta	24/03/07
Grp D	Czech Republic	TBD	Germany	24/03/07
Grp D	Rep. of Ireland	TBD	Wales	24/03/07
Grp D	Cyprus	TBD	Slovakia	24/03/07
Grp E	Israel	TBD	England	24/03/07
Grp E	Estonia	TBD	Russia	24/03/07
Grp E	Croatia	TBD	F.Y.R. Macedonia	24/03/07
Grp F	Spain	TBD	Denmark	24/03/07
Grp F	Liechtenstein	TBD	Northern Ireland	24/03/07
Grp G	Netherlands	TBD	Romania	24/03/07
Grp G	Luxembourg	TBD	Belarus	24/03/07

Grp G	Albania	TBD	Slovenia	28/03/07
Grp A	Azerbaijan	TBD	Finland	28/03/07
Grp A	Poland	TBD	Armenia	28/03/07
Grp A	Serbia	TBD	Portugal	28/03/07
Grp B	Ukraine	TBD	Lithuania	28/03/07
Grp B	Georgia	TBD	Faroe Islands	28/03/07
Grp B	Italy	TBD	Scotland	28/03/07
Grp C	Hungary	TBD	Moldova	28/03/07
Grp C	Turkey	TBD	Norway	28/03/07
Grp C	Malta	TBD	Greece	28/03/07
Grp D	Wales	TBD	San Marino	28/03/07
Grp D	Rep. of Ireland	TBD	Slovakia	28/03/07
Grp D	Czech Republic	TBD	Cyprus	28/03/07
Grp E	Andorra	TBD	England	28/03/07
Grp E	Israel	TBD	Estonia	28/03/07
Grp F	Northern Ireland	TBD	Sweden	28/03/07
Grp F	Liechtenstein	TBD	Latvia	28/03/07

*More fixtures to be added in forthcoming ABSW Editions

ITALIAN PAGE



Italian Affair

By Joe Russo

The demise of Parma is another sad story to emerge from the world of Italian football. Sitting in the bottom part of the Serie A table, the club is almost certain to be relegated at the end of the season.

It's a far cry from the great days of 1990 when they first appeared in the Serie A.

Parma's rise through the ranks of Serie A football and through Europe - UEFA Cup and Cup Winners' Cup titles - was the stuff of fairytales even though a Scudetto eluded the club. The closest they got was second place to Juventus.

Owned by the then giant Italian dairy company Parmalat, Parma's fortunes nosedived a few years ago when the company got into serious financial strife.

Cut free from Parmalat, Parma has never really been able to sustain itself. Now, under the guidance of Claudio Ranieri for the last few weeks, nothing much has changed.

The team's best player, Australia's own Vince Grella, won't be there at the end of the season and who could blame him.

Once Parma is finally relegated, as expected and barring miracles, it will truly be the end of an era in Italian soccer.

★ ★ ★

Palermo's recent 1-1 draw with Fiorentina was very controversial. In fact, any time a former player returns to play against his old club is always special. However, when that former player is Luca Toni it is even more special.

The match finished in a draw but it was the way Fiorentina equalised that enraged Palermo coach Francesco Guidolin.

Adrian Mutu scored for the visitors when a Palermo player (Guana) was down injured. It appeared to be well in Mutu's sight, but he later claimed to be unaware of Guana's plight.

Guidolin remonstrated with both the officials and Fiorentina's bench; subsequently he received a three-match ban for his trouble. He expected that Mutu wouldn't have played on but that's not how it turned out.

It is always a difficult one to judge: should a player kick the ball out, despite being in a goal-scoring position, to allow an opponent to receive treatment?

Guidolin thought so. But it needs to be clarified in the laws of game because, currently, the practice is based on a gentleman's agreement.

The interpretation of that gentleman's agreement was in question here.

It is custom and practice to kick the ball out but, given the fiasco of the last World Cup when everyone went down injured for seemingly trivial reasons, one could not blame someone for continuing to play.

FIFA needs to clear up this area of the game; perhaps if a player goes down injured that player could compulsorily spend three minutes on the sideline. At least it would be some incentive to avoid the unnecessary collapse at the drop of a hat.

★ ★ ★

Christian Vieri is back in training with Atalanta. The former Inter, Juventus, AC Milan, Atletico Madrid and Italy star striker is said to be back training with the team, as opposed to doing his own individual sessions.

It would have been a shame had he not returned to the playing fields, as rumoured would occur in some parts of the Italian media a few months ago.

Vieri is of course no stranger to Atalanta having played there for a season over a decade ago before transferring to Juventus.

It was a disastrous off-season for Vieri and many people openly questioned his will to continue in the sport after he signed, and then withdrew, from a contract with Sampdoria.

Italian Affair suspects his malaise runs deeper after his unhappy spell at AC Milan and then transfer to Monaco in France in January 2006.

An injury finally put to rest to any fading hopes he had of playing for Italy in last year's World Cup.

Vieri had always been one of the most committed players to Italy's cause and he, more than anyone else, would have loved to be part of a winning World Cup team.

Italian Affair wishes him all the best and vividly remembers his only appearance as a professional footballer in Australia: in 1999 to celebrate the opening of the Olympic Stadium (now Telstra Stadium) at Homebush in Sydney as part of the All Stars team that took on the Socceroos.

★ ★ ★

Sydney readers can tune into Sunday Night Soccer, on 98.5 FM every Sunday night at 10.00pm, for all the latest local and international news.

ASCOLI 1
INTER MILAN 2

Inter striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic made it five goals in his last five league matches by scoring twice in the second half to sink bottom-placed Ascoli.

The home side grabbed a stoppage-time consolation goal from the penalty spot after Walter Samuel fouled Sasa Bjelanovic, but it came too late to prevent Inter extending their lead at the top to 18 points.

CAGLIARI 0
CHIEVO 2

Chievo put three points between themselves and the relegation zone thanks to second-half goals by Matteo Brighi and Erjon Bogdani. Cagliari are level on points with Chievo, but risk slipping into the bottom three after earning just five points in the last nine matches.

CATANIA 1
REGGINA 4

Goals by Nicola Amoruso, Pasquale Foggia, Ricardo Esteves, and a Rolando Bianchi penalty had wrapped up Reggina's victory long before Fausto Rossini pulled one back for Catania in the final minute of the match. The win lifted Reggina, who have a 15-point penalty for match-fixing, out of the relegation zone.

FIorentina 0
AS ROMA 0

Second-placed Roma had drawn four and lost one of their five previous away matches prior to arriving at Fiorentina's Stadio Franchi. They were frustrated again by the twice Italian champions, who played with 10 men after Dario Dainelli's 33rd-minute sending-off but were saved by the heroics of keeper



Roma's Matteo Ferrari (left) and Fiorentina's Luca Toni in action during the 0-0 draw in Florence.

SERIE A TABLE

Sampdoria 1 Palermo 1, AC Milan 1 Atalanta 0, Ascoli 1 Inter 2, Cagliari 0 Chievo 2, Catania 1 Reggina 4, Fiorentina 0 Roma 0, Messina 0 Torino 3, Parma 1 Siena 0, Udinese 4 Livorno 0, Lazio 3 Empoli 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
1 Internazionale	28	24	4	0	61	23	76
2 Roma	28	17	7	4	55	22	58
3 Lazio	28	15	7	6	47	22	49
4 Palermo	29	13	8	8	43	34	47
5 AC Milan	28	14	9	5	38	24	43
6 Empoli	28	11	9	8	28	27	42
7 Fiorentina	28	15	7	6	45	24	37
8 Sampdoria	28	9	8	11	35	35	35
9 Udinese	28	9	8	11	34	37	35
10 Catania	29	8	8	13	36	54	32
11 Atalanta	28	7	11	10	40	40	32
12 Torino	28	8	7	13	24	39	31
13 Livorno	28	6	11	11	27	43	29
14 Chievo	28	6	9	13	31	39	27
15 Siena	28	5	13	10	24	32	27
16 Cagliari	28	5	12	11	21	32	27
17 Reggina	28	9	9	10	38	40	25
18 Messina	28	5	9	14	28	46	24
19 Parma	28	4	10	14	24	46	22
20 Ascoli	28	3	10	15	21	41	19

Sebastien Frey. The Frenchman parried a series of shots to salvage a point that keeps Fiorentina in the hunt for a European place.

LAZIO 3
EMPOLI 1

Lazio took the lead with another spectacular goal from Goran Pandev. A long ball into the midfield was won back by Stefano Mauri and, as Daniele Balli was off his line, without hesitating Pandev placed a perfect lob into the empty net from 30 metres.

Rocchi started and finished the move, as Pandev rolled back across for the on-coming ex-Empoli striker to smash a powerful shot under the bar with the inside of his right foot.



Massimo Ambrosini receives the congratulations of his teammates after his lone-goal secured three valuable points for AC Milan.

Christian Manfredini gathered from Stephen Makinwa and unleashed an absolute rocket from the edge of the area in at the near post, his second goal in as many games, 3-0.

Empoli only got a goal back in the final seconds of stoppages. Luciano Zauri's dangerous play inside the area prompted an indirect free kick that was touched on for Almiron, although it seemed to take a deflection off Manuel Belleri in the wall.

MESSINA 0
TORINO 3

Torino striker Alessandro Rosina inspired his side to their first away win in three months, setting up Roberto Muzzi for the opening goal, then winning and converting a penalty to extend their lead in the second half. Roberto Stellone's 84th-minute header completed the result, hauling Torino closer to mid-table safety and pushing Messina into the relegation zone.

AC MILAN 1
ATALANTA 0

Milan's Brazilian strikers Ricardo Oliveira and Ronaldo both went close to scoring, but it was Italian workhorse Massimo Ambrosini who resolved the game for the home side by heading in from a corner in the 40th minute.

The midfielder is proving a key figure in Milan's drive for a top-four finish, having headed the winner in games against Siena and Sampdoria last month.

ROUND 30

Sunday 1st April, 2007

Atalanta v Fiorentina

Cagliari v Messina

Chievo v Sampdoria

Empoli v Ascoli

Inter v Parma

Livorno v Catania

Reggina v Siena

Roma v AC Milan

Torino v Palermo

Udinese v Lazio



All smooth sailing for Inter... Zlatan Ibrahimovic celebrates his double effort against Ascoli with Luis Figo. Inter is now 18-points clear of second-placed Roma.

PARMA 1
SIENA 0

Claudio Ranieri celebrated his first league win in six matches since taking over as coach of relegation-threatened Parma last month.

Midfielder Andrea Gasbarroni fired in the winner from outside the area midway through the first half. Siena's chances of fighting their way back into the contest were killed off in the 76th minute, when Paul Codrea was sent off for a second bookable offence.

UDINESE 4
LIVORNO 0

A goal in each half by Antonio Di Natale, and one each for his fellow strikers Gyan Asamoah and Paulo Barreto, who got Udinese's fourth from the penalty spot after being tripped by defender Rahman Rezaei, sealed an easy win for the hosts. It was Udinese's first win in seven matches. Livorno, meanwhile, are slipping down the standings having earned three points in their last five matches.

SAMPDORIA 1
PALERMO 1

Palermo were well-placed to shake off their recent indifferent league form with a win following the first-half sending-off of home defender Giulio Falcone for a challenge on Fabio Simplicio.

The Sicilians, who remain in the top four despite earning only nine points in their last 10 matches, duly took the lead through Edison Cavani in the 53rd minute, only for a defensive mix-up to allow Fabio Quagliarella to grab an equaliser three minutes later.

SERIE B TABLE

Bologna 1 Mantova 1, Albinoletta 1 Verona 1, Brescia 0 Rimini 2, Cesena 2 Genoa 1, Crotone 2 Napoli 1, Lecce 1 Modena 0, Piacenza 3 Frosinone 0, Spezia 3 Arezzo 1, Treviso 0 Bari 0, Vicenza 1 Pescara 0, Juventus v Triestina - Tuesday AESST

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Juventus	27	18	7	2	51	18	52
Napoli	28	12	13	3	33	20	49
Piacenza	28	14	5	9	34	31	47
Rimini	28	12	10	6	40	25	46
Bologna	28	13	7	8	33	24	46
Genoa	28	13	7	8	41	33	46
Mantova	28	10	14	4	31	19	44
Cesena	29	11	8	10	40	42	41
Albinoletta	28	8	15	5	31	27	39
Vicenza	28	9	9	10	31	26	36
Triestina	27	9	10	8	24	25	36
Brescia	28	9	9	10	29	34	36
Treviso	28	8	10	10	31	30	34
Frosinone	28	8	10	10	26	36	34
Spezia	29	7	12	10	32	37	33
Lecce	28	9	5	14	35	40	32
Bari	28	7	10	11	22	27	31
Verona	28	7	8	13	17	27	29
Crotone	28	6	10	12	24	39	28
Modena	28	6	8	14	19	29	26
Pescara	28	4	9	15	23	47	20
Arezzo	28	4	12	12	21	32	18

Juventus [-9] and Arezzo [-6] handed points penalties due to Calciopoli.
Triestina [-1] and Pescara [-1] penalised for financial reasons.



ENGLISH



ASTON VILLA 0
LIVERPOOL 0

There were few chances in a defence-dominated game and many of the crowd had left by the time Villa goalkeeper Thomas Sorensen denied Robbie Fowler in the last minute.

Villa will be happy with a point that edges them closer to safety while Arsenal's defeat at Everton means that a draw is not a bad result for Liverpool, who have now taken only five points from their last five games.

CHARLTON 2
NEWCASTLE 0

Charlton closed to within four points of safety with a deserved victory.

On-loan China captain Zheng Zhi nodded in the first after 53 minutes after a Darren Bent free kick came back off the bar and, after missing a series of chances, Charlton made sure with a late Jerome Thomas penalty after Zheng was brought down.

EVERTON 1
ARSENAL 0

England striker Andy Johnson scored in injury time to propel Everton into the top six and loosen Arsenal's grip on third place.



West Ham's Bobby Zamora threw his side a lifeline in their ambition to avoid relegation in what has been a disastrous campaign for the Londoners.

Everton hit the post twice through Lee Carsley and Leon Osman while Jeremie Aliadiere shot over for Arsenal during their best spell in the second half.

BLACKBURN 1
WEST HAM 2

A controversial victory, but West Ham will be happy with their first away win of the league season.

Christopher Samba headed Blackburn in front but Carlos Tevez won and converted a 71st minute penalty. Sparks flew four minutes later, though, when a Bobby Zamora shot in a goalmouth melee struck Tevez on the line and a goal was awarded by referee Howard Webb although later replays showed it had not crossed the line.

Blackburn's misery was compounded by a late red card for forward David Bentley.

CHELSEA 3
SHEFFIELD UNITED 0

Chelsea's Ukraine striker Andriy Shevchenko crashed home a fine opener after four minutes and the champions never looked back.

Salomon Kalou poked home the second in the 17th minute after a cross from winger Shaun Wright-Phillips, whose free kick just before the hour was headed in by German substitute Michael Ballack.

MANCHESTER UNITED 4
BOLTON 1

Cristiano Ronaldo was superb as he created a three-goal lead for United after 25 minutes, ensuring the leaders a sixth consecutive league win.

The Portugal winger went on a solo run before cutting back for Park Ji-sung to drill home the opener in the 14th minute. He then put Wayne Rooney through for the second and his fizzing shot proved too hot for keeper Jussi Jaaskelainen to handle – with Park on hand to snap up the loose ball.

Rooney added a fourth in the 74th minute on the break before Gary Speed converted a late consolation penalty for Bolton.

MIDDLESBROUGH 0
MANCHESTER CITY 2

City ended a run of five consecutive league defeats with a much-needed win.

French defender Sylvain Distin fired home from close range after a corner from midfielder Joey Barton in the 62nd minute and Belgian forward Emile Mpenza made sure with his first City goal in the 74th minute. It was their struggling team's first win since Jan. 1.

READING 0
PORTSMOUTH 0

Reading failed to win for the fifth game in succession with a dull 0-0 stalemate at home to Portsmouth.



Michael Ball of Manchester City (left) is challenged by Andrew Davies during Middlesbrough v Manchester City at the Riverside Stadium.

Portsmouth almost grabbed the points in the 82nd minute when a strike from Richard Hughes hit the angle of post and bar but there were few other clear-cut chances.

TOTTENHAM 3
WATFORD 1

The headlines will all be for Spurs keeper Paul Robinson, who scored from inside his own half against his England understudy Ben Foster in the 63rd minute.

Midfielder Jermaine Jenas headed Spurs in front but the killer blow was supplied by Robinson's booming free kick bounced over Foster's head. Egyptian Hossam Ghaly added the third before Darius Henderson got an 89th minute consolation.

WIGAN ATHLETIC 0
FULHAM 0

A dull affair between two sides hovering just above the relegation zone who were both happy with a risk-free point.



Tottenham Goalkeeper Paul Robinson salutes the fans with a thumbs up after his wonder strike from over half-way of the field found the back of the net.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Manchester Utd 4 Bolton 1, Chelsea 3 Sheffield Utd. 0, Middlesbrough 0 Manchester City 2, Reading 0 Portsmouth 0, Tottenham 3 Watford 1, Wigan 0 Fulham 0, Blackburn 1 West Ham 2, Charlton 2 Newcastle 0, Aston Villa 0 Liverpool 0, Everton 1 Arsenal 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Man. United	30	24	3	3	70	20	75
2 Chelsea	30	21	6	3	54	19	69
3 Arsenal	29	16	7	6	51	24	55
4 Liverpool	30	16	6	8	44	20	54
5 Bolton	30	14	5	11	35	38	47
6 Everton	30	12	10	8	38	26	46
7 Tottenham	30	13	6	11	43	44	45
8 Reading	30	13	5	12	43	38	44
9 Portsmouth	30	11	9	10	36	31	42
10 Blackburn	30	12	4	14	36	41	40
11 Newcastle	30	10	7	13	34	39	37
12 Middlesbrough	30	9	9	12	32	36	36
13 Aston Villa	30	7	13	10	29	35	34
14 Fulham	30	7	13	10	31	44	34
15 Man. City	29	9	6	14	22	34	33
16 Wigan	30	9	6	15	30	44	33
17 Sheffield United	30	8	7	15	25	44	31
18 Charlton	30	7	6	17	28	49	27
19 West Ham	30	6	5	19	23	51	23
20 Watford	30	3	11	16	19	46	20

ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIP

Southampton 1 Colchester 2, Preston North End 2 Burnley 0, Coventry C. 4 Barnsley 1, Derby County 3 Cardiff C. 1, Leicester C. 1 QPR 3, Luton T. 0 Ipswich 2, Norwich 1 Stoke C. 0, Plymouth Argyle 1 Crystal Palace 0, Sheffield W. 2 Wolverhampton 2, Southend 1 Leeds 1, Sunderland 2 Hull C. 0, WBA 1 Birmingham C. 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Derby	39	22	7	10	54	39	73
2. Birmingham	38	21	8	9	55	35	71
3. Sunderland	39	21	7	11	60	39	70
4. Preston	38	20	8	10	56	41	68
5. Wolverhampton	39	19	9	11	45	41	66
6. WBA	39	18	10	11	66	46	64
7. Cardiff	39	17	12	10	54	42	63
8. Southampton	39	16	12	11	61	48	60
9. Stoke	39	15	13	11	47	33	58
10. Colchester	39	16	8	15	57	48	56
11. Crystal Palace	39	15	10	14	48	43	55
12. Sheffield W	39	14	11	14	58	59	53
13. Plymouth	38	12	16	10	51	50	52
14. Coventry	39	15	7	17	43	49	52
15. Norwich	38	14	8	16	48	56	50
16. Ipswich	39	14	6	19	49	52	48
17. Leicester	38	11	13	14	41	48	46
18. Burnley	37	10	11	16	36	41	41
19. Hull	39	11	8	20	41	58	41
20. Barnsley	39	12	5	22	45	69	41
21. Queens PR	38	10	10	18	45	59	40
22. Southend	39	9	12	18	40	59	39
23. Luton	39	9	9	21	47	67	36
24. Leeds	39	10	6	23	39	64	36

ENGLAND LEAGUE 1

Swansea C. 2 Chesterfield 0, Bournemouth 1 Millwall 0, Bradford 1 Northampton T. 2, Brentford 0 Rotherham 1, Brighton & Hove A. 1 Scunthorpe U. 1, Carlisle 1 Huddersfield 1, Crewe Alexandra 0 Bristol C. 1, Doncaster R.0 Cheltenham 2, Leyton Orient 2 Oldham 2, Nottingham F. 1 Gillingham 0, Port Vale 2 Tranmere R. 3, Yeovil 0 Blackpool 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Scunthorpe	38	21	12	5	59	28	75
2. Bristol City	38	21	8	9	53	34	71
3. Nottingham Forest	38	19	10	9	50	35	67
4. Yeovil	38	18	10	10	48	34	64
5. Oldham	38	18	9	11	60	38	63
6. Blackpool	37	16	11	10	51	38	59
7. Tranmere	38	16	11	11	48	39	59
8. Swansea	38	16	10	12	55	40	58
9. Doncaster	38	14	12	12	42	39	54
10. Carlisle	38	14	11	13	39	46	53
11. Millwall	38	15	7	16	47	51	52
12. Port Vale	38	15	5	18	50	50	50
13. Crewe	38	14	7	17	57	62	49
14. Huddersfield	38	12	13	13	49	58	49
15. Northampton	38	12	12	14	38	39	48
16. Brighton	38	13	9	16	43	48	48
17. Leyton Orient	38	11	13	14	52	62	46
18. Gillingham	38	13	7	18	46	63	46
19. Bournemouth	38	11	10	17	40	52	43
20. Bradford	38	10	11	17	41	51	41
21. Cheltenham	38	11	7	20	37	52	40
22. Chesterfield	38	10	9	19	39	47	39
23. Brentford	38	7	12	19	29	57	33
24. Rotherham	37	11	8	18	50	60	31

*Rotherham penalised 10-points

FA CUP FIXTURES SIXTH ROUND REPLAYS

19th March, 2007.

Manchester United v Middlesbrough
Tottenham v Chelsea

The sixth-round replays were played in the early hours of this morning, Tuesday 20th of March, and as a consequence, results could not be published due to ABSW's print deadline.

SEMI-FINALS

Blackburn v Chelsea or Tottenham
Watford v Middlesbrough or Manchester United

EPL FIXTURES

Saturday 31st March, 2007

Liverpool v Arsenal
Bolton v Sheffield United
Charlton v Wigan
Fulham v Portsmouth
Manchester Utd. v Blackburn
Newcastle v Manchester City
West Ham v Middlesbrough
Watford v Chelsea

Sunday 1st April, 2007

Tottenham v Reading
Monday 2nd April, 2007
Aston Villa v Everton



EUROPEAN TABLES & RESULTS



SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Hearts 0 Dundee Utd 4, Inverness C.T. 1
Dunfermline 3, Rangers 3 Aberdeen 0,
Falkirk 1 Celtic 0, Kilmarnock 1 Hibernian 5

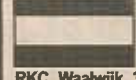
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Celtic	31	23	5	3	57	24	74
2 Rangers	31	18	7	6	52	24	61
3 Aberdeen	31	16	6	9	42	28	54
4 Hearts	31	13	9	9	38	30	48
5 Hibernian	31	13	7	11	53	35	46
6 Kilmarnock	31	12	7	12	42	51	43
7 Falkirk	31	11	3	17	37	41	36
8 Dundee Utd	31	9	9	13	34	50	36
9 Inverness	31	8	10	13	34	43	34
10 Motherwell	30	9	6	15	33	47	33
11 St Mirren	30	5	11	14	23	43	26
12 Dunfermline	31	4	8	19	18	47	20



BELGIUM JUPILER LEAGUE

Geminal Beerschot 1 Lokeren 2,
Anderlecht 0 Zulte-Waregem 0, Beveren 1
Lierse 1, Club Brugge 4 FC Brussels 1,
Mons-Bergen 5 Racing Genk 0, Sint-Truiden 1 Charleroi 1, Westerlo 1
Mouscron 0, AA Gent 0 Cercle Bruges 2,
Roeselare 2 Standard Liege 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Genk	26	17	6	3	59	27	57
2 Anderlecht	26	16	8	2	48	25	56
3 Standard	26	16	4	6	54	32	52
4 AA Gent	26	14	4	8	43	32	46
5 Club Brugge	26	13	6	7	46	28	45
6 Charleroi	26	12	7	7	36	30	43
7 Westerlo	26	11	6	9	31	30	39
8 G Beerschot	26	9	7	10	35	36	34
9 Roeselare	26	9	7	10	40	44	34
10 C Brugge	26	9	5	12	22	32	32
11 Z Waregem	26	8	8	10	31	37	32
12 Mons	26	8	6	12	27	32	30
13 Sint-Truiden	26	7	6	13	31	39	27
14 Mouscron	26	6	9	11	34	44	27
15 Brussels	26	5	11	10	25	37	26
16 Lokeren	26	5	10	11	23	34	25
17 Beveren	26	5	6	15	24	46	21
18 Lierse	26	4	4	18	20	50	16



DUTCH EREDIVISIE

RKC Waalwijk 3 Roda Kerkrade 2, Den Haag 2 Sparta Rotterdam 4, SC Heerenveen 4 NAC Breda 2, NEC Nijmegen 0 Excelsior Rotterdam 1, FC Groningen 1 FC Twente 1, FC Utrecht 2 Vitesse Arnhem 0, Feyenoord 0 Willem II 0, Heracles Almelo 0 AZ Alkmaar 0, PSV 1 Ajax 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 PSV	29	21	4	4	65	20	67
2 Ajax	29	19	5	5	70	31	62
3 AZ	29	17	9	3	71	26	60
4 Twente	29	17	7	5	60	32	58
5 Feyenoord	29	14	7	8	52	49	49
6 Heerenveen	29	14	5	10	48	35	47
7 Roda	29	11	9	9	34	35	42
8 NAC	29	12	6	11	40	43	42
9 Utrecht	29	11	7	11	34	39	40
10 Groningen	29	11	6	12	42	50	39
11 NEC	29	10	7	12	29	35	37
12 Vitesse	29	9	7	13	45	47	34
13 Sparta	29	9	5	15	34	55	32
14 Willem II	29	7	6	16	28	55	27
15 Heracles	29	5	10	14	24	50	25
16 Excelsior	29	6	6	17	35	54	24
17 Waalwijk	29	5	7	17	27	54	22
18 Den Haag	29	3	7	19	35	60	16



ENGLISH LEAGUE TWO

Chester C. 0 Rochdale 1, Shrewsbury T. 2 Peterborough 1, Accrington 1 Torquay 0, Bristol R. 2 Notts County 0, Bury 1 Macclesfield T. 1, Darlington 1 Hereford U. 0, Grimsby T. 1 Swindon T. 0, Lincoln T. 1 Barnet 0, Mansfield T. 1 Boston U. 2, Milton Keynes Dons 2 Wrexham 1, Stockport County 3 Hartlepool U. 3, Wycombe 0 Walsall 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Hartlepool	38	22	9	7	54	33	75
2 Walsall	38	20	12	6	55	27	72
3 M Keynes	38	21	7	10	65	51	70
4 Lincoln C	38	20	7	11	65	50	67
5 Swindon T	37	20	7	10	47	32	67
6 Stockport	37	19	6	12	54	40	63
7 Wycombe	37	16	10	11	43	32	58
8 Darlington	38	15	12	11	45	41	57

9 Shrewsbury	34	13	13	8	54	35	52
10 P'borough	38	15	7	16	53	50	52
11 Grimsby	38	15	5	18	45	60	50
12 Mansfield	38	13	10	15	53	52	49
13 Bristol Rvrs	36	13	10	13	38	38	49
14 Hereford	38	13	10	15	42	46	49
15 N County	38	12	12	14	46	48	48
16 Chester	38	12	11	15	36	38	47
17 Rochdale	36	12	10	14	48	39	46
18 Barnet	37	12	9	16	45	57	45
19 Bury	37	10	9	18	40	54	39
20 Accrington	38	9	11	18	54	67	38



GREEK SUPER LEAGUE

Egaleo Athens 1 OFI Crete 2, Ionikos Nikea 0 PAOK Saloniki 2, Ergotelis 0 Apollon Kalamaria 1, Xanthi Skoda 1 Panionios 1, Iraklis Saloniki 1 Larisa 0, Kerkyra 0 AEK Athens 1, Olympiakos 0 Aris Saloniki 0, Panathinaikos 1 Atrionitos 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Olympiakos	26	20	3	3	53	18	63
2 AEK	26	16	7	3	49	21	55
3 Panathinaikos	26	16	3	7	43	23	51
4 PAOK	26	11	6	9	28	24	39
5 Aris	26	8	13	5	25	22	37
6 Panionios	26	9	9	8	25	26	36
7 OFI	26	10	6	10	35	38	36
8 Atromitos	26	8	10	8	36	40	34
9 Ergotelis	26	9	6	11	24	25	33
10 Xanthi	26	7	11	8	19	18	32
11 Kalamarias	26	8	7	11	22	30	31
12 Larisa	26	8	7	11	27	34	31
13 Kerkira	26	7	9	10	26	30	30
14 Egaleo	26	7	6	13	24	35	27
15 Iraklis	26	7	4	15	21	33	25
16 Ionikos	26	2	3	21	9	49	4



FRENCH LIGUE 1

Sochaux 4 Toulouse 2, Lille 0 Le Mans 2, Marseille 3 Nice 0, Monaco 2 Nantes 1, Nancy 0 Lyon 3, Saint-Etienne 3 Troyes 1, Sedan 1 Bordeaux 1, Valenciennes 0 Lorient 0, Auxerre 1 Lens 0, Rennes 1 PSG 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Lyon	29	20	5	4	54	23	65
2 Lens	29	13	10	6	42	31	49
3 Bordeaux	29	13	5	11	31	30	44
4 Lille	29	11	10	8	36	27	43
5 Sochaux	29	11	10	8	35	34	43
6 Toulouse	29	12	7	10	33	33	43
7 St-Etienne	29	12	6	11	46	39	42
8 Marseille	29	12	6	11	35	29	42
9 Le Mans	29	10	11	8	35	33	41
10 Auxerre	29	10	11	8	32	33	41
11 Rennes	29	10	10	9	25	24	40
12 Monaco	29	10	8	11	34	30	38
13 Lorient	29	9	10	10	25	29	37
14 Nancy	29	9	9	11	26	34	36
15 V'ciennes	29	9	6	14	29	40	33
16 Nice	29	7	10	12	25	30	31
17 Troyes	29	7	9	13	29	44	30
18 Nantes	29	6	11	12	25	36	29
19 PSG	29	6	10	13	27	36	28
20 Sedan	29	5	12	12	37	46	27



GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Hertha BSC 0 Energie Cottbus 1, Alemannia Aachen 2 Arminia Bielefeld 0, Borussia Dortmund 0 Nurnberg 0, Eintracht Frankfurt 1 Bayern Munich 0, Hannover 0 Hamburg 0, Schalke 1 Stuttgart 0, Wolfsburg 3 Bochum 1, Bayer Leverkusen 1 Monchengladbach 0, Werder Bremen 2 Mainz 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Schalke	26	16	5	5	42	25	53
2 Bremen	26	15	5	6	61	33	50
3 Stuttgart	26	13	7	6	42	30	46
4 Bayern	26	13	5	8	39	31	44
5 Leverkusen	26	11	6	9	40	35	39
6 Nurnberg	26	8	14	4	36	24	38
7 Hannover	26	9	8	9	33	37	35
8 Hertha	26	9	7	10	36	42	34
9 Aachen	26	9	6	11	41	45	33
10 Wolfsburg	26	7	11	8	27	29	32
11 Energie	26	8	7	11	29	36	31
12 Eintracht	26	6	12	8	33	44	30
13 Mainz	26	7	9	10	23	37	30
14 Hamburg	26	5	14	7	29	27	29
15 Dortmund	26	7	8	11	29	37	29
16 Bochum	26	7	6	13	30	42	27
17 Arminia	26	6	8	12	31	38	26
18 M'gladbach	26	6	6	14	21	32	24



CROATIA FIRST DIVISION

Hajduk Split 2 Varteks Varazdin 0, HNK Sibenik 1 Pula Staro Cesko 0, Modirurje 1 Kamen 1, NK Zagreb 2 NK Osijek 1, Slaven Belupo 1 Cibalia Vinkovci 0, Dinamo Zagreb 1 NK Rjeka 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 D Zagreb	23	20	2	1	56	18	62
2 Hajduk	23	17	3	3	41	12	54
3 Zagreb	23	15	1	7	39	20	46
4 Sibenik	23	11	4	8	34	30	37
5 Slaven	23	10	4	9	25	25	34
6 Modirurje	23	10	2	11	32	36	32
7 Rjeka	23	9	3	11	37	38	30
8 Varteks	23	8	4	11	31	42	28
9 Osijek	23	6	8	9	24	34	26
10 Pula	23	4	7	12	18	29	19
11 Cibalia	23	3	3	17	18	42	12
12 K Ingrad	23	3	3	17	22	51	12



PORTUGUESE FIRST DIVISION

Nacional 2 Boavista 0, FC Porto 0 Sporting Lisbon 1, Aves 2 Academica Coimbra 2, Beira Mar 2 Maritimo 2, Uniao Leiria 1 Vitoria Setubal 1, Pacos Ferreira 0 Belenenses 2, Amadora v Benfica - Tuesday AESST

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Porto	22	17	1	4	46	12	52
2 Benfica	21	15	3	3	42	15	48
3 Sporting	22	13	7	2	33	13	46
4 Belenenses	22	10	4	8	25	20	34
5 Braga	21	9	5	7	26	25	32
6 P de Ferreira	22	8	8	6	24	28	32
7 Nacional	22	9	4	9	32	28	31
8 Leiria	22	8	6	8	17	21	30
9 Maritimo	22	8	5	9	26	29	29
10 N 1° Maio	21	7	7	7	21	22	28
11 Boavista	22	5	10	7	23	25	25
12 Amadora	21	6	6	9	15	24	24
13 Academica	22	5	5	12	23	36	20
14 Setubal	22	3	7	12	13	31	16
15 Beira-Mar	22	2	9	11	21	43	15
16 Aves	22	2	7	13	14	29	13



SPANISH PRIMERA LIGA

Valencia 0 Racing Santander 2, Mallorca 2 Real Betis 0, Recreativo Huelva 0 Barcelona 4, Athletic Bilbao 0 Osasuna 3, Deportivo La Coruna 1 Getafe 0, Espanyol 1 Levante 1, Villarreal 1 Real Sociedad 1, Zaragoza 1 Atletico Madrid 0, Real Madrid 2 Gimnastic 0, Sevilla 2 Celta de Vigo 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Barcelona	27	15	8	4	57	25	53
2 Sevilla	27	16	5	6	48	24	53
3 Real Madrid	27	14	6	7	37	24	48
4 Valencia	27	14	5	8	37	26	47
5 Zaragoza	27	13	7	7	40	27	46



Sutherland Sharks' Paul Harries celebrates his goal against the Blacktown City Demons



Aurelio Vidmar pulling the strings at Adelaide

By Mark Stavroulakis

Current Adelaide United interim coach Aurelio Vidmar understands that a good Asian Champions League campaign can possibly win himself a permanent deal as coach of the Reds for season 2007-2008.

It's been a massive step up from his former role as Reds' assistant coach, but since John Kosmina's resignation a couple of weeks back, the former Socceroos skipper has packed quite a punch in getting the team ready for Asia.

At the age of 40, Vidmar has been given a chance to show his worth as a coach, and thus far, the entire squad have really taken a liking to their new manager.

Having played for clubs such as Adelaide City, KSV Waregem, Standard Liege, Feyenoord, Sion, Tenerife and Sanfrecce Hiroshima, the South Australian born attacker with Slovenian heritage took the time out in chatting with ABSW Editor Mark Stavroulakis about his up and coming duties with the Reds and loads more issues revolving around the world game.

MS: Aurelio, what's been your reaction thus far coaching the Reds in the Asian Champions League?

AV: It's been very exciting for me as things happened so quickly in me getting this role as interim coach.

It's of course been a big challenge for me so far as a lot of responsibility has been placed upon me now so the first few days were a bit nerve racking but things have gotten better with me now.

I've known most of the players for quite some time now so that's helped immensely but overall, I've been quite content with the progress we've done so far in preparations for the Asian Champions League games.

MS: What's been the overall reaction within the Reds squad especially after the unfortunate start to the ACL with a loss to Chinese side Shandong Luneng?

AV: Firstly, I'd have to say that it was tough trying to get the players momentum back up and running after what happened in the Grand-Final last season.

The lads took a week off which did them well but mentally it has been tough pumping the boys up.

It worked though against Shandong Luneng and I thoroughly believed we deserved at least a point in that match so we were hard done by with the result.

I was really pleased with the way the boys went about playing their game against them so the mood has been pretty up-beat which has come at a good time now that we're facing Dong Tam Long An in Vietnam.

MS: What's the step up been like from being an assistant to full-time coach of Adelaide United?

AV: It's all come a little early for me but I've been given 12 weeks to prove myself so I will be doing whatever it takes to get something out of this. I know that the job is there to be taken.

It's a funny feeling but now everyone looks towards you as being the leader and also looks for direction of how the team will go but I've become used to that now.

MS: So what's the current situation with your

contract then?

AV: I've been given 12 weeks to show my worth as I said before but I've put in my application in for being the full-time coach after that period.

I have been placed in a process like any other interested coach has for the job at Adelaide and the club will of course be looking at different options.

I'm just concentrating in playing good football and getting positive results for the club.

MS: How have you seen the squad itself so far, have you been happy with the players?

AV: It's been a bit difficult as we've had a mass amount of injuries to contend with as it showed in our first ACL match.

We had Diego, Ross Aloisi, Bobby Petta, Jason Spagnuolo and Shengqing Qu all out.

I only had 16 fit players and with ACL rules, you are allowed to have up to nine substitutes, I only had five, all mostly defenders and a keeper so I didn't have much attacking options.

When you look at these players we had a large chunk of our experienced stars out.

But in saying that, the boys that played did extremely well and I was proud of the effort they put on at Hindmarsh.

I thought we deserved at least a point but it wasn't to be.

MS: In terms of new inclusions to the squad you guys have signed Paul Agostino and Jonas Salley, will we see more new recruits at the club?

AV: The club moved quickly in signing both Paul and Jonas who will be important players for the team's quest for the championship next season.

I believe we will see a few more faces, who that may be, I really can't tell you at this point in time.

MS: What's been your preparations for the up and coming Asian Champions League clash against Vietnamese side Dong Tam Long An who lost their first game 4-1 to Seongnam Chunma?

AV: Preparations have been pretty good, training has been quite intense as we know that this really is a must win game for us.



Reds' interim coach Aurelio Vidmar shown embracing experienced defender Michael Valkanis during last season's finals series

We were lucky enough to have received a decent amount of material on Shandong Luneng and that helped in the style of play we put out two weeks ago.

However, obtaining material on Dong Tam Long An has been really tough although we did get their first Asian Champions League match where they lost 4-1 but it was tough analysing them considering they played in six inches of snow.

What we do know is that Dong Tam Long An are supposed to be the easier of the Asian sides we're going to come up against and I am looking towards getting an important away victory.



Former Reds' coach John Kosmina shown alongside current Adelaide coach Aurelio Vidmar

MS: Who won't be traveling to Vietnam?

AV: Jason Spagnuolo, Shengqing Qu and Lucas Pantelis are all out injured while Diego is also on the recovery list and Adam van Dommele is getting married.

MS: How has the team taken to you being the coach, speaking to club captain Angelo Costanzo a few weeks back, he's thrown his full support in backing you during the ACL?

AV: That's good to hear that players have taken a liking to me I guess it's never easy when you've been put in this situation as I know most of the players so I will certainly be doing no favours for anyone. Whoever is good enough to play will play, it's as simple as that.

At the end of the day they're all professionals and have to act professionally like I will be doing but I know the guys have responded really well so far.

MS: Being a former attacking star in your hey day where you played in countries like Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Spain and Japan, what's your take on two of your rising young guns in Nathan Burns and Bruce Djite?

AV: They are great kids who really want to learn and are enthusiastic about playing as good as possible.

I'm happy with their progress so far as they've done extremely well but now is the hard part for both of them to keep performing as they also have their Olyroos duties to contend with their Reds duties.

I've spoken to both players and have stated to them if they stay and think professional, look after themselves in this tough period, it will toughen them both up for the better.

At their rate, they have a massive future ahead of them and I'm sure Adelaide United are lucky to

have them on their books.

MS: How's your brother Tony doing? Do you guys keep in regular contact?

AV: Tony's doing really well at the moment, he has one more year left at the Mariners and hopes to do well and stay injury free.

It was a tough debut year for him in the A-League last year as he came back from that heart scare he had and went through a passage where he picked up a few niggling injuries but I know he's determined to do one better this year.

I speak to him on a regular basis and I can tell he

can't wait for the year to start.

MS: Do you still speak to John Kosmina, how's he keeping these days?

AV: I caught up with Kossie last Wednesday at the Olyroos match and he's doing fine.

Someone like him shouldn't be lost in our game and I am highly confident that you will see him back coaching a side very soon.

Kossie played with his heart on his sleeve and continued that with his coaching which is rare to find these days.

MS: Finally, what's your take on former players becoming managers, is this a good thing for the game, is it successful?

AV: That's a tough question as it could go both ways. You've heard of a lot of good players from across the world finishing their careers and not wanting to coach at all, or having a crack at it and not succeeding, I guess it's really up to the individual.

I always wanted to be a coach after my playing days and when I retired playing with Adelaide United, I knew that's what I wanted to do.

I understand that it's quite a fickle business, one day your on top of the world then a few losses down the track and your out of a job but that's the business of being a coach.

Take a look at Arrigo Sacchi, the guy wasn't the best footballer but as a coach he did extremely well.

MS: Aurelio, good luck in Vietnam, hope you do both Adelaide and Australia proud in picking up your first three points of the ACL campaign and all the best in winning a permanent deal with the Reds.

AV: Thanks Mark, we'll do our best in bringing home maximum points, thanks for your time.